

Built by Grüter + Gut Motorradtechnik near Lucerne, it is assembled with typical Swiss precision using aerospace-quality materials for the frame and bodywork and an 1130cc BMW engine and six-speed transmission to make it go. And go it does: with a nought to 60mph time of 4.9 seconds it's as quick off the mark as a Bentley Continental GT and the 117mph top speed is more than enough to lose you your licence anywhere in the world. A considerably faster Quadster version powered by BMW's 167hp K1200S motorcycle engine is also available at a starting price of £36,000.

"These are basically beautifully made, high performance toys for rich people. Owners range in age from 21 to 87 and include a celebrity television doctor and basketball player Michael Jordan – even Tom Cruise is said to be contemplating buying one," says engineer Antony Cummings, whose Manchester-based company, Boom Trikes, distributes the GG quad in the UK.

If you're used to a conventional motorcycle it takes a while to acclimatise to riding a road-going quad. It's important, of course, to remember that there's a wheel at each corner rather than merely one at the back and one at the front, and that you steer rather than lean to negotiate bends. Stability should not be taken for granted, either – the GG Quad's huge tyres do endow it with impressive traction, but an excess of enthusiasm could undoubtedly end in disaster.

But machines such as the GG and the Quadster have a new and serious rival in the form of a three-wheeled "super-



Above: the Grinnall R3T trike, £25,000, has a 150hp, 2.3 litre Triumph Rocket Three engine.

trike" manufactured by the Canadian firm Bombardier. The Can-Am Spyder (about £8,000) is powered by a 990cc, V-twin engine that produces more than 100hp and promises a top speed of 120mph – but possibly the most interesting technical aspect of the Spyder is that it bristles with "anti-crash" technology, some of which is not even available on the best luxury cars. EBD (electronic brake distribution) ensures that the appropriate braking force is applied to each wheel for the current road conditions and SCS (stability control system with roll-over mitigation) promises to help keep the Spyder upright in the event of a potential roll-over. Unlike

conventional motorised trikes, however, the Spyder is configured with two wheels at the front and one at the back rather than vice-versa. And yet at Grinnall in Worcestershire they do things the old-fashioned way and are experiencing an ever-increasing demand for their BMW and Triumph-powered trikes that cost from £12,000 to £25,000.

But what has caused this sudden craze for motorcycles with too many wheels?

"In my opinion, the current interest in trikes has come about because people are fitter and richer than ever before; it's as simple as that," says Grinnall founder Mark Grinnall, who branched out into "supertrike" building seven years ago

after establishing himself as a leading maker of high-performance, three-wheeled cars during the early 1990s.

"Most of our customers are wealthy business people in the 40 to 50 age range who have either had motorcycles in the past or always wanted one but have never felt confident about riding them. By buying a motorcycle-based trike they are realising the opportunity to enjoy the freedom of motorcycles in a very safe form, with the additional benefit that you don't need a motorcycle licence to be allowed to use one. Our machines are very easy to ride and very easy to learn to ride, although the technique is completely different to that used for a motorcycle."

The latest addition to the Grinnall line-up is the £25,000 R3T trike that is powered by Triumph's 150hp, 2.3 litre Rocket Three engine, the largest powerplant fitted to any production motorcycle. At a third of the weight of the average car it provides impressive performance and also boasts a decent carrying capacity thanks to an underseat storage space and a 45 litre "boot". If demand is sufficient, Grinnall also plans to create a version capable of carrying three people.

It's certainly considerably more exciting than the last trike I owned – it was called a Lion, it was made by Raleigh and it was my pride and joy. When I was four. ♦

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**Boom Trikes** (0161-799 7103; [www.boom-trikes.co.uk](http://www.boom-trikes.co.uk)). **Bombardier** (004121-318 7860; [www.spyder.brp.com](http://www.spyder.brp.com)). **Grinnall** (01299-822 862; [www.grinnallcars.com](http://www.grinnallcars.com)).