

MOTORIZR Z3

From free with contract,
£170 on prepay
www.hellomoto.co.uk

Features

- Two-megapixel camera
- Expandable memory
- A2DP-support
- Quad-band

Pros

- The soft paint finish is a nice touch, while all the features you expect from a mid-range phone are present.

Cons

- The music player sounds a little weedy through the supplied headphones and the camera setting controls can confuse.

Also consider

Samsung D600

Mobile Choice's Phone of the Year 2005 is still going strong (you can pick it up on prepay for around £120) and it sports pretty much the same feature line-up as the MOTORIZR Z3.

Early rizer

After wooing us with the KRZR late last year, Moto has been busy fashioning a slider companion, the **MOTORIZR Z3**. Is Moto's two-pronged attack a winner?



MOTOROLA has been living off past glories too much recently, so the launch of the MOTOKRZR K1 at the end of last year was a welcome and refreshing change from the army of RAZR phones taking over the world.

The KRZR, while displaying a heavy dose of the RAZR's DNA (it is essentially a retooled and stretched RAZR), still has enough style and individuality to distance itself a little from the ubiquitous classic and its legacy. With its reflective façade and soft paint rear finish, we fell for the KRZR over here at Choice Towers.

But Motorola hasn't rested on its laurels and relied solely on the KRZR making an impact. Along with a couple of HSDPA handsets, namely the RAZR V3xx and the Maxx, Moto's other mainstream star in the making is the MOTORIZR Z3 – its first ever slider phone to hit the UK. Like the KRZR, this handset is 2.75G (or EDGE-enabled, to give it its proper term) and packs pretty much the same feature set as its stable-mate.

Tackling the slider

While the RIZR is Moto's first UK slider, it isn't strictly its first slider phone. It cut its teeth on the A732 back in the summer of 2005 but that handset never made it to Blighty. However, for a company not really schooled in this format, Motorola has taken to it like Cristiano Ronaldo to deep sea diving. In fact, it may have over-compensated for its long absence, with the RIZR's skater action packing extra spring along with a smooth glide. Motorola has also dutifully included a neat ridge just below the screen to give a grip when opening and closing the phone.

The RIZR mimics the KRZR's elongated body and seems quite protracted for a slider phone, but its svelte 16mm profile compensates for this. For a quick vital statistics comparison, it's just a tad larger than the KRZR.

Apart from a plastic front panel, the RIZR is swathed from head to toe in a soft paint veneer that makes for an incredibly tactile phone. Just like a member of the X-Men, this rubbery finish is quite adept at rejuvenating its surface from scuffs and scratches. Just a wet wipe of its surface and, voila, good as new. Of course it won't repel deep gouges

but the RIZR is more protected than most handsets.

The phenomenal success of the RAZR means that Motorola remains somewhat attached to many of its features, and the famous nickel-plated keypad makes a reappearance on the RIZR. The front controls also get the RAZR treatment, making the phone great to handle.

As we alluded to in our KRZR review back in issue 126, Motorola has rehabilitated its much-maligned user interface to silence the dissenters. Many complained about the convoluted process but now the manufacturer has ironed these kinks out for a more seamless approach. Improvements include reduced clicks to send a text message with the predicted word suggestions appearing in the body text for easier nomination, while the phonebook has also been updated with a more linear and accurate contact search. Although these refinements appear minor, the new UI is far slicker. But if you're new to any phone's user interface, it will always take time to familiarise yourself with its quirks.

A two-megapixel camera is perched on the rear cover, which you can fire up with a side-dedicated shutter key. Unlike the KRZR, the lens is joined by an LED flashlight that, while it doesn't work like a proper automatic flash, illuminates your subject before capture. It's a bit of a hit and miss experience, sometimes causing images to be overblown with light, but when you get it right it can highlight darkened areas nicely.

With the majority of phones you delve into the camera menu to adjust your picture settings like colour, lighting conditions and exposure, but with the RIZR and most other Motorola handsets you use the navigation pad to hop between settings. It's not the most intuitive approach and you do get confused easily. The pictures themselves are good for a two-megapixel lens and show nice detail and focus, if a little washed out at times. One gripe is the fact you can't send a photo via Bluetooth straight after capture. Instead you have to access it via your image library before sending wirelessly, which is a bit irritating.



High-rise: Moto's first UK slider phone is a success despite the homage to that damn RAZR phone

The RIZR's music player is a little basic in terms of sound enhancement and comes across as a little weedy through the provided proprietary earphones. Luckily, the RIZR supports A2DP, so you can wirelessly stream your music to a compatible pair of headphones. This does boost the audio quality, and we used some Jabra BT620s and experienced increased bass drive.

A microSD card slot is on hand to store your tunes and photos with a current maximum 2GB card capacity available. And you're going to need this with only 20MB of internal memory embedded.

The RIZR is also a global traveller with quad-band capabilities so you can use it in Europe, Africa, Asia, North America and South America should you wish.

The RIZR doesn't have the style of the KRZR but it's nevertheless a competent mid-range slider phone. But while all these new Moto handsets are encouraging, they're still in some tiny way in awe of the RAZR. Isn't it about time Motorola really severed its RAZR ties and wowed us all over again with something completely different? Over to you Moto.

Nick Renshaw
nick.renshaw@nhmedia.co.uk



MOBILE CHOICE

Stats

Size: 106x46x16mm

Weight: 115g

Display: 262,000 colours

Resolution: 176x220 pixels

Camera: 2 megapixels

Video recording/playback:

Yes/yes

Audio playback: MP3, AAC, AAC+

Connectivity: Bluetooth, USB

Internal memory: 20MB

Memory card slot: MicroSD

Java: Yes

Games: Blocker Breaker

Deluxe, eBay Pocket Auction

Messaging: SMS, MMS, IM

Internet browser: WAP 2.0, xHTML

Email client: POP3, SMTP, IMAP4

Ringtones: Polyphonic, MP3

GPRS: Yes + EDGE

Frequency: Quad-band

Talktime: 200 mins

Standby: 230 hours

Verdict

As a mid-ranger the RIZR ticks all the right boxes but Motorola needs to step out of its RAZR mindset because it's becoming a tad boring.

84%