

IF YOU'VE any sort of hankering to be a motorcyclist, I shouldn't bother to read this test at all — unless you're *that* bored, fresh out of beer, or just out for cheap laughs. If you're none of these, you've got no business reading *Bike* magazine, but, as the bit of Rusky wizardry that is the subject of this test has no business being in it, here's something for you, sunshine.

I really tried with this one, I mean putting myself in the position of a non-motorcycle man who's only two-wheel trip is up to the depot and back with a box of sarnies under a bargain ex-army stormcoat from the Expand and Fart — you know the sort of picture. Then I thought of the cheapo price and maybe I'd be able to say it was a nice bike for a kid of 17 who wasn't too flash. Then I rode the thing.

In a mile an' a half I was closer to a pine overcoat than I've been in a long time, and that's no way to begin a road test. Straight-away all thoughts of being lenient went out the window.

At around 28 mph I was tailgating a Galaxy, waiting for a chance to pass, when

125 VOSKHOD

the sucker did the usual kill - the - motorcyclist act of turning right, with no signals, just as I pulled out of his offside. It happens so often, the reaction of braking, dropping behind and zipping up the inside is as second nature as a J. Arthur Rank after a cold night out. And if I get any more junk I'm sticking to that.

Steady braking — nothing. Heavier braking, by which time, of course, things were a little more desperate — I didn't really want to slide into the side of a Greek in a Galaxy. Only way out was to let off the brakes (?) and ride through the turn with

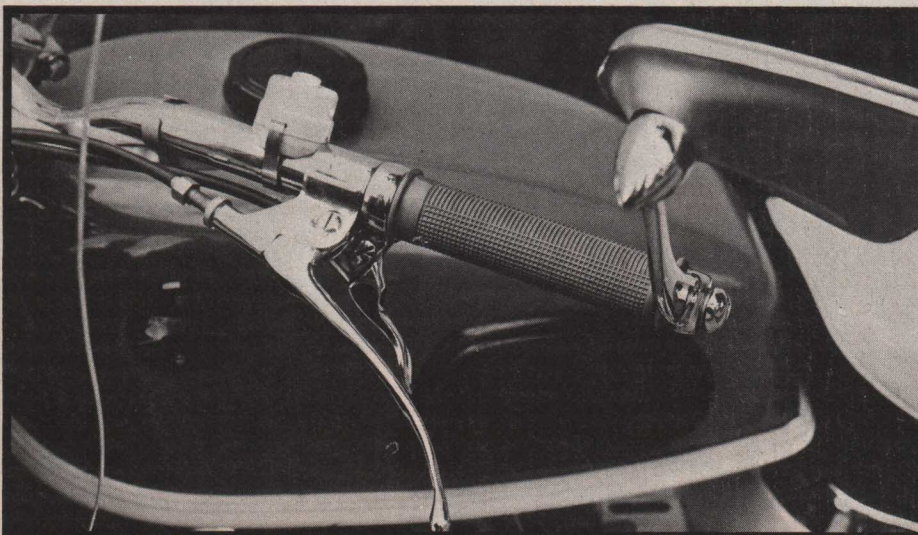
him. Fortunately the old Bubble & Squeak noticed the horrified fellow beside him and slowed up. As I discovered later, it was just as well he did, as if I'd avoided him by leaning down further I'd have come off anyway as the tyres grip about as well as the brakes stop.

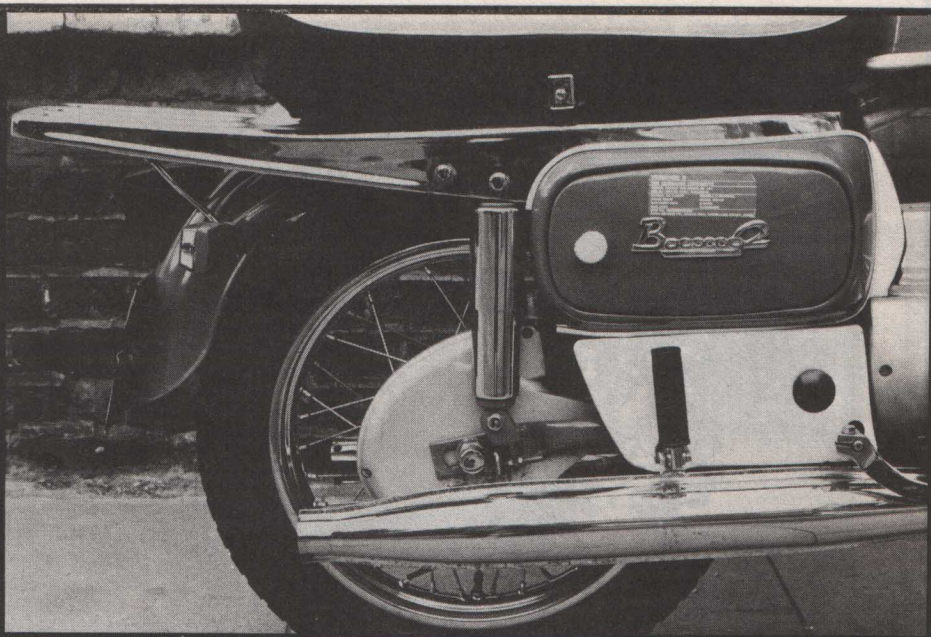
I rode the bike another half mile to a friend's house and left it for a fortnight.

Though unfortunately time prevented it, I was rather keen on getting the Voskhod to an MOT station so I could say officially that this bike is dangerous. I'll give you the whole story of the front brake in all its glory. The first quarter of an inch pull on the lever starts the forks dipping as the oval drum smacks the shoes. After that, the lever can be forced back against the twistgrip with next to nothing happening until you reach about five miles an hour, when it sort of stops the bike a little. Using just the front brake, I measured the distance it took to stop from 30 mph and it came out at 180ft. Nice, huh?

The indicators are also illegal. There's a minimum of flashes per minute set down in one of those Traffic Acts the summonses are always quoting. Because the Voskhod's electrics run off the generator and not through a battery, there's not enough current to trip the winker relay until about 40 mph in top. Could have sworn that was ten miles per over the town limit.

The frame is so badly made that if you take a vertical line through the wheels, the front one is an inch and a half to the right



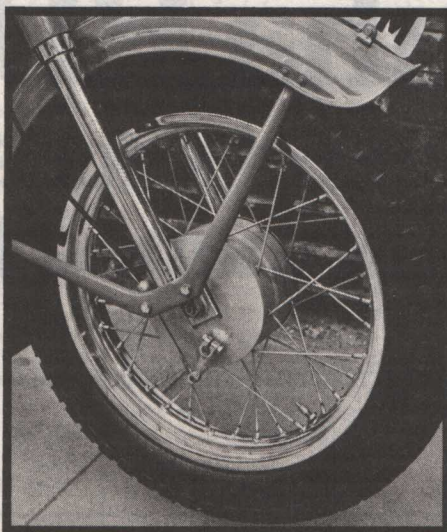


okay, though I can't see why they have to design an engine that needs two exhaust ports when it's supposed to be cheap.

Riding position and suspension (in a straight line) are nice and comfortable, and the screen and legshields keep off 75 per cent of wet weather. I guess if the only riding you want to do is at 45 mph on deserted roads you'd be alright. Oh, and the lights work well. Hurrah for that.

I don't think going into technical details is worth the paper and anyway, I've only one can left. I just can't think of any circumstance where this bike could be good for anything, which is about all there is to say really. You'd have to ride the thing yourself to appreciate why this test is like it is. I mean I hate the 175 Voskhod so much it's an effort to say anything. And if you think it's because we're all 150 mph Jap bike freaks, you're bloody wrong.

With bike riding getting increasingly hazardous all the time, mainly because of shitty roads and lunatic four-wheelers, anything like the Voskhod is a killer. I hope to God I never see one on the road. ●



East-West detente suffers a mortal blow as Martin Harrison discovers Soviet biking and wishes he hadn't

of the rear and about ten degrees off the vertical. No wonder it doesn't handle and tries to veer across the road when you have to give a hand signal, which you have to do to make up for the useless winkers.

Starting is easy though, not that I care much, but you might want to know. For some obscure reason, it's fitted with a decompressor — you don't need it for starting, in fact it won't start if you do use it, and to stop the motor you turn the ignition key off. Oh well. The valve in the head does leak oil though, along with the head joint itself. And while we're in that area, our test bike, which hadn't even been fully run in at that stage, had an exhaust port joint that had been carefully sealed up with Gun-gum. Thought we wouldn't notice, eh Satra?

It's the attention to the little details that go to making this bike so wonderful. Plastic switches I suppose we'll let pass, as it is a cheap deal, but why the hell bother to put a mirror on that makes a car a half mile away look like a juggernaut about to inspect your anus? And if you're fitting a sprung centre-stand, why not get the spring length and mounting points right so it pops up and supports itself? Oh no, make the spring so feeble it hardly lifts the stand off the ground, then we'll bolt a special piece of bent metal to the back of the engine that the stand can clip in to, and everyone with white shoes can hoof the stand up and get covered in oil.

I suppose the engine and gearbox work

The motor (top left), as its appearance suggests is staid and old-fashioned. Built in luggage rack (above) is standard. (Below left) cheap plastic switches . . . Brakes (below right) are feeble.

Checkout

Engine	.....	Piston port 2-stroke
Bore & stroke	...	62 x 58 mm
Capacity	.....	173.7 cc
Compression ratio	.....	7.5:1
BHP @ RPM	...	11.5 @ 5,500
Carburettor	.....	K36 flat slide type
Primary drive	...	Rollerless chain
Clutch	.....	Multi-plate wet
Gear ratios overall	.....	(1) 18.66:1 (2) 11.88:1 (3) 8.48:1 (4) 6.06:1
Electrical system	.....	6v direct from generator

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	.....	51.2 ins
Handlebar height	.....	42.9 ins
Ground clearance	.....	5.3 ins
Width	.....	27.2 ins
Weight (dry)	...	247 lbs
Fuel capacity	...	3.17 galls

CYCLE PARTS

Tyres	.....	Russian
(front)	.....	3.25 x 16
(rear)	.....	Russian 3.25 x 16

EQUIPMENT

Trafficators, toolkit, legshields, luggage carrier, screen, spare spokes, gaskets and chain links.

PRICE/WARRANTY

£195 inc VAT
6 months or 6,000 Kms parts and labour.
Importers — Satra Belarus Ltd.,
Canada Rd., Oyster Lane, Byfleet,
Surrey.