

cycle guide

NOVEMBER 1972 75 CENTS

Special 46 Page Section

SUPER BIKE SHOWDOWN

**Test Reports And Comparative Summary
Of The Seven Top Muscle Machines**

**Exclusive -- All New 750 Yamaha - 1973 Triumph Trident -
Plus: H-D Sportster - Honda 750 - Kawasaki Mach IV -
Norton Commando - Suzuki GT 750 -**



C0497000000
 CALL CY & SAC SUP
 P O BOX 152
 FAIRBURY

IL 61739

CY

England is an island. A channel no more than 26 miles wide separates it from the land mass of the European continent. During the course of recorded history the English have followed a readily discernible pattern of the underdog-size wise-overcoming the larger European nations. It is further reflected by the stance they chose to select in facing, over the years, the perilous times any nation must face. They took a look at what they had, the ocean, and what they didn't have, size, and acted accordingly. They developed their navy, and this argosy of smaller, highly maneuverable craft enabled them to sink the allegedly invincible Armada of Spain.

The success of their sea hawks launched them into several colonizing centuries during which they forged out, rightly or wrongly, an empire upon which the sun never set. This same indomitable spirit was exhibited in 1940 during the Battle of Britain. Their more maneuverable Spitfires repelled the Aryan air hordes over the English Channel stymieing the little corporal's dream of an impenetrable European stronghold.

Now what this all demonstrates is that the English have this fondness for maneuverability. They pick up on handling over brute force. And when it comes to handling two wheelers we opt for the Englanders, like those from Coventry—home of the Triumph Tridents. *Another English twin, the Norton Commando, rated second in the very closely contested subjective scheme of things, and both, we feel, are significantly better handlers than the other bikes tested.*

We are no strangers to the Triumph Trident. After a six-hour test and a recent 5,000 mile report, we were delighted to hear that the 1973 model was being flown over from England especially for our comparative evaluation. It arrived little more than 48 hours before testing was scheduled to begin and didn't have very many miles logged on the odometer. *Four of the bikes had over 2,000 miles. The Kawasaki had about 300, and the Yamaha was factory fresh—another special import for the test.* We noticed the sharp paint job and the new front disc brake right off. And there was the long-awaited five-speed gear box. We were anxious to see how the '73 compared to the '72 as well as to the other makes since we had felt the previously tested '72 had been quite an improvement over the prior year's model. After riding the English triple we were pleased to conclude that the line on progress chart graph is still nosing upward. Triumph has definitely kept up the good work.

Now about this handling thing. When the quickest distance between point A and point B, which are not



co-existent on a straight line, is the primary concern, then we recommend Birmingham's double-piped triple. With it there is minimum concern about unpleasantries like being spit off or being otherwise deposited along the wayside.

High speed roadability is this machine's forte. It tracks a good straight line, is stable when twisting on the power and leans over into the corners with little effort. You have to get it over a good bit before worrying about anything scraping the road surface. Our only complaint with the high speed riding position is the height of the handlebars. They are noticeably raised on this new '73 model so that they are now as high as those on the Harley. We didn't notice any change upon taking on a passenger as we traversed the course. Last year's Trident still has the highest miles per hour average of any bike included in our six-hour testing. Horsepower alone is not responsible for that standing. The machine has to navigate the corners and the esses in order to pile up that average. Triumph is one manufacturer who seems to appreciate the concept that power increase isn't worth much if the rolling chassis doesn't keep pace with such developments. The stability and predictability of the Trident are what make it such a pleasure off the straights.

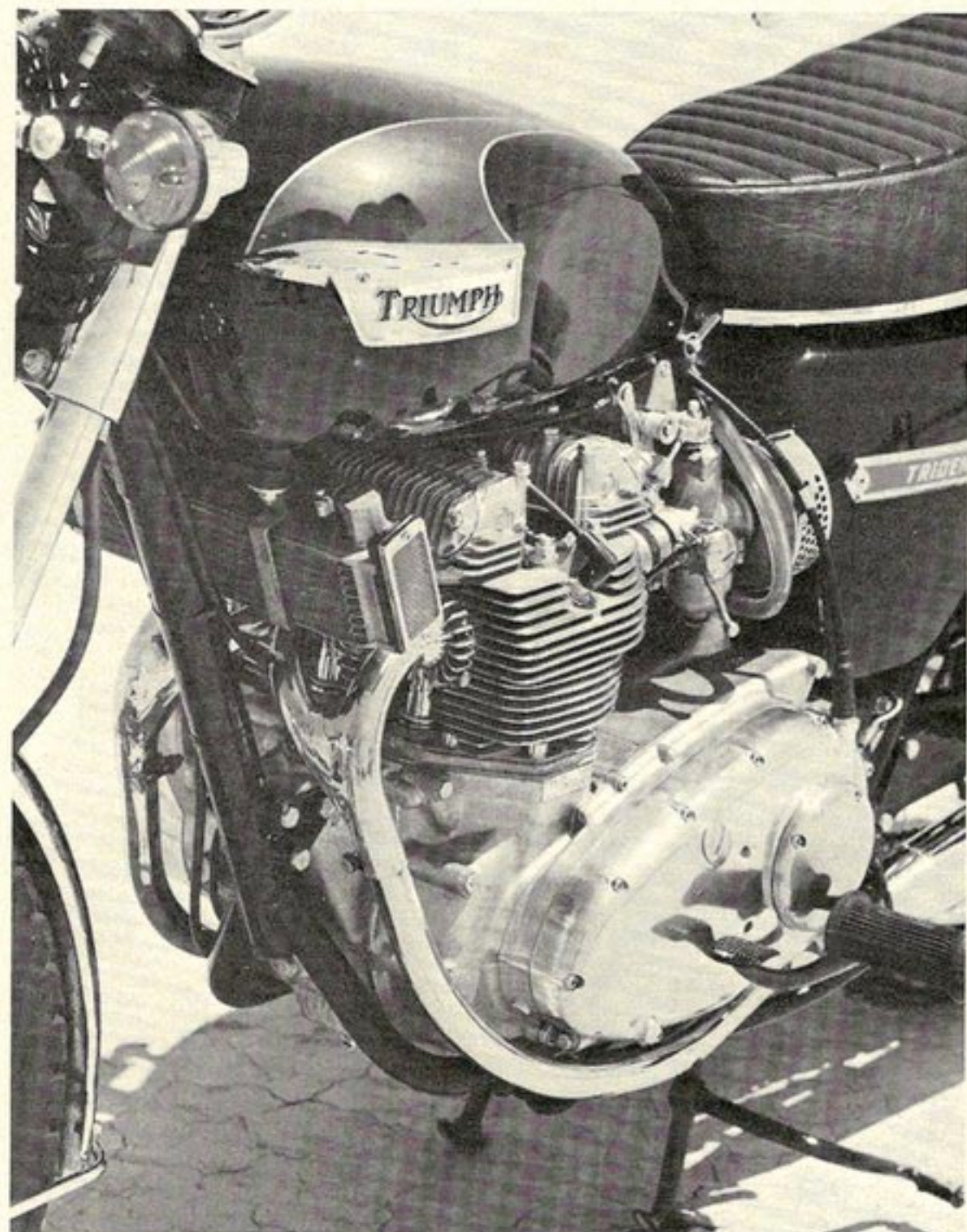
The Dunlop K81 tires lend their contribution to that overall feeling of stability. Beside gripping the road

surface like molasses, they don't exhibit much inclination toward wearing out easily. These wheel mounts were specifically designed for the big multi and still looked very good after the rigors of six-hour and 5,000 mile testing. Although clearance isn't a problem, we would still like to see folding footpegs rather than the fixed type that are provided. Suspension, front and rear, obviously, is good.

Braking performance during high speed handling rates the Triumph at the head of the class. On our Little Jim Dandy Evaluation Sheet the new disc front binder rated superb, and the rear brake received an excellent. We're not quite sure where superb rates above excellent on a scale of zero to 100, but there was only one other instance of its use. *We also rated Norton's front braking system superb for high speed roadability performance.* What we're talking about here is braking response, control and confidence as the bike encounters the various turns, cut backs, esses and other less than straight road surfaces that are so enticing to two wheeled riders. Response occurs almost as soon as pressure, which we would rate considerable, is applied to the control lever. The response is smooth, with no rear end bounce and no bothersome front end nose dive. During panic stop testing the bike was easily controlled. The braking is very easily read. There was no fade at 35, and after experiencing some initial fade from overheating at 65, it didn't in-

crease with repeated stopping. Full-stop performance of the 485 pound, fully fueled (50 pounds lighter than the Suzuki, 60 pounds heavier than the Norton, it ranked fourth in overall weight) triple was 48 feet stopping from 35 mph (11.5 feet behind the Yamaha) and 176 feet stopping from 65 mph (43 feet behind the Honda). The Trident ranked fourth stopping from 35 and fifth stopping from 65. The disc is an obvious improvement over the conventional front binder, which diminished in performance greatly beyond 75 mph.

The Trident gets on the power at around 2500 and stays there until it approaches red line at eight grand. We shifted at 7500 rpm. There's as much torque as you could ever expect to use (only the Harley seemed to pull a wider band) and shifting isn't very critical. It will pull regardless of the gear. One shift at each end of the



The ever present oil cooler, an engine saver for those who like to cruise long distances on warm days.

course was all that was necessary.

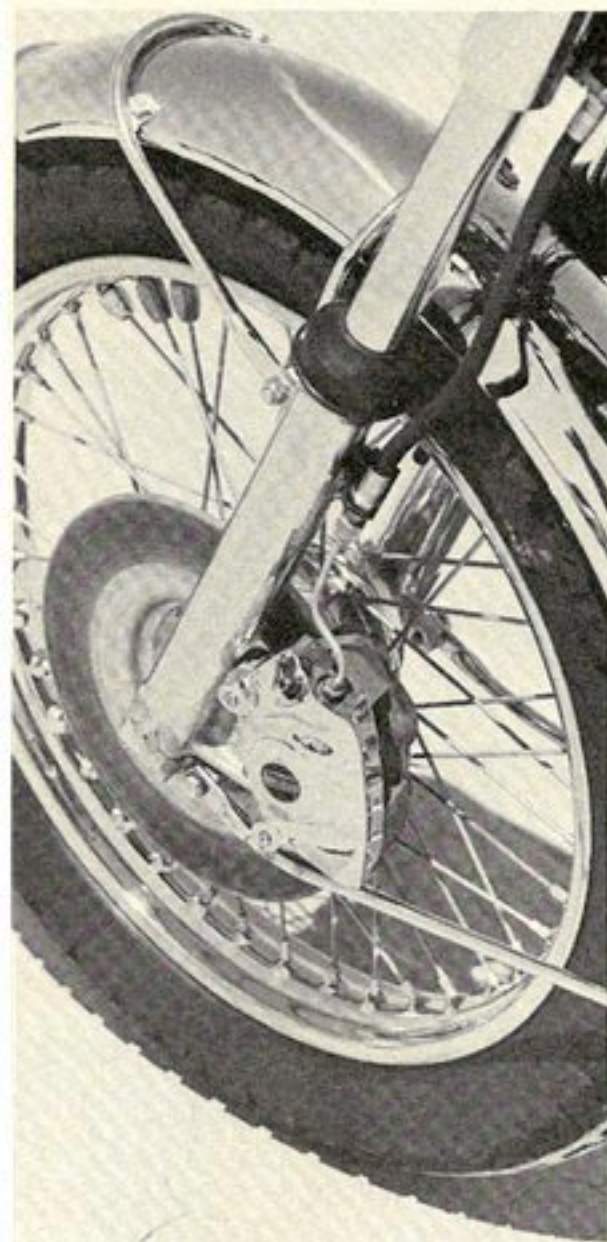
At the drag strip the triple sneaked into the twelves with a 12.99 and with a top terminal speed of 101.46. This placed it third behind the Kawasaki and the Norton, whose best effort was 12.92, 103.21. We just wound it up and dumped it. Tracking was good and straight. A slight inclination toward breaking loose wasn't bothersome. The Triumph was just a little more effort to get off the line than the two easiest bikes, the Harley and the Norton.

Top speed of 110 was indicated on the speedometer. Since the speedometer consistently understated true speed at both 60 mph (4.78%) and 80 mph (5.58%), we feel the true top speed is in the vicinity of 117.

Our best e.t. with the '72 model,

admittedly handicapped with clutch slippage, was 13.09. We had no such problems with the '73. We just dropped the hammer. The shift lever had the shortest travel of any bike tested and was also probably the smoothest engaging. Sometimes we weren't sure we really had moved up a notch it was so smooth, but we never missed a shift. The clutch lever requires average pressure and engages upon release. We did have to use the clutch shifting from first to second, but after that it wasn't necessary. The gearbox ratio is excellent, although as we mentioned before not extremely important because of the pulling power of the machine. We weren't subjected to the aggravation of trying to find neutral at a stop. Shifting was, simply stated, just a joy.

The Triumph uses an automotive type single disc dry clutch rather than the more common multi-plate wet or dry clutch assemblies. We feel this



Triumph's new disc brake features a double acting caliper. Because of this the caliper is rigidly mounted to the lower fork leg. The wheel is built so another disc can be fitted to the "t" right.

is one of the major contributors to the smooth fast shifting performance of the bike.

After eyeing the front brake we next noticed the modified tank and the higher handlebars. The seam down the middle of last year's tank top is now gone. Our test model was painted black with red as a secondary color. The tank retains the jaunty manner of its predecessor. Paint and chrome work are excellent.

Starting is still the good old fashioned way, as they say. Three kicks cold generally did the job, one when hot. Warm up was no more than two minutes. Throttle response was very quick and smooth. As we had indicated in previous testing, this English machine has completely shed its former habit of leaking. The three cylinder OHV engine rests in a single loop frame. The oil cooler has been retained just under the gas tank.

The seat is comfortable. Its height presents no problems planting both feet on the road surface at stops and is excellent for taking aboard a passenger. The hand grips are comfortable although we don't like the higher bars. We did notice vibration at about 5000 rpm and felt it both in the footpegs and seat. *Comfortwise we rate the Trident a close third behind the Honda and our favorite, the Suzuki. Noise fatigue and vibration were the factors responsible for placing the triple behind the Honda.* Exhaust noise, although not low, is not a bother to the rider. The decibel meter declared the Trident to be third noisiest bike. *The three quickest bikes were also the three loudest.* We liked the tone emitted from the three into two exhaust system. The Trident uses but two pipes that fit into the bottom of a "w" shaped head pipe, the top of which attaches to the three cylinder spigots. This permits retention of the balanced, one pipe to a side look and reduces exhaust noise because of the routing of center exhaust through both mufflers. *It is kind of interesting to note that the three triples included in the comparison test are equipped with three different exhaust pipe configurations. The Kawasaki runs out three straight pipes, stacking two on the right side, while the Suzuki splits the middle pipe into two pipes which channel to either side for a balanced two mufflers on each side look.*

As you might suspect by now, we feel the Trident excellently measures up to the purpose for which it was designed. As a high performance touring machine, this is the one we would probably recommend to our friends. Roadability is its virtue, and with credentials like that, what more is there to say, really. *Bob Braverman/Walt Fulton, Jr.*



TRIUMPH TRIDENT

Engine Type	three cylinder four stroke
Bore and stroke	67x70mm
Displacement	741cc
Compression Ratio	9.5:1
Max. Horsepower	60 @ 7250 rpm
Max. Torque	45 ft/lbs @ 6900 rpm
Ignition	alternator/coil
Carburetion	three 26mm Amal
Lubrication	dry sump
Wheelbase	57 in.
Ground Clearance	6.5 in.
Weight-wet	485 lbs.
Front tire size	4.10x19 in.
Front brake type	hydraulic disc
Rear tire size	4.10x19 in.
Rear brake type	internal expanding
Transmission	constant mesh 5-speed
Clutch	dry, single plate
Internal gear ratios	(1) 2.585; (2) 1.837; (3) 1.40; (4) 1.19; (5) 1.0
Final ratio	5.258
Countershaft sprocket	18
Rear wheel sprocket	53
Indicated highest one-way speed	110 mph
Braking distance 35-0	48 ft. 4 in.
Braking distance 65-0	176 ft. 3 in.
Quarter-mile acceleration:	
Top speed	101.46
Elapsed time	12.99
Air filtration	dry felt
Battery type	12V
Fuel tank	3.5 gal.
Fuel reserve	.2 gal.
Oil tank	3.5 qt.
Gear box	1 pt.
Front suspension	telescopic double damping
Rear suspension	adjustable spring over shock
Frame type	tubular, single cradle

COLORS

Black with red trim

PRICE AS TESTED

Approx. \$1,932.00 suggested retail, Los Angeles

DISTRIBUTOR

Triumph Motorcycle Corporation

P.O. Box 275

Duarte, Ca. 91010

TRIUMPH TRIDENT

