Cycle®

OCTOBER 1980 75P

- Fast And Snappy Kawasaki KZ550
- Suzuki's Get-Around SP400T Four-Stroke

THE $20,000 KAWASAKI FACE-OFF

AMERICA'S MYSTERY SHIP MEETS ITALY'S BIMOTA KB1

- Comparison: Nine Tank Bags
- Yamaha's Plucky IT175G Enduro
- Two Tales Of 500 Grand Prix Motocross Carlsbad Burn-Down And Canadian GP

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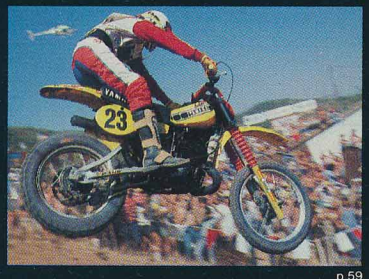

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This Month's Cover: Yes, Virginia, these are street bikes. Both the Bimota Kawasaki KB1 and Craig Vetter's Mystery Ship may look a little spacey and a lot racey, but mere ordinary folks with $10,000 loose change in their knickers might buy one or the other for a street tooter. Please refer to page 52 for the answer to the question: Can $20,000 buy happiness? Robin Riggs charged only slightly less to shoot this cover with his Magic Brownie and 147 birthday candles with backing mirrors.

THE GOLD DUST CHALLENGE... MYSTERY SHIP MEETS BIMOTA

● HELLO THERE; IT'S TIME TO GET irrational. Go blow up your sterling silver piggy bank, flatten your wallet, mortgage your house, and get ready to do some serious funny-farm spending. For starters, you could mail off a princely deposit to Mystery Ships, Inc., in San Luis Obispo, California; wait an appropriate period until someone drops a Mystery Ship on your doorstep; and then ante up the balance of $10,000. Only 200 M-Ships will be built, and every one will have a signed-and-numbered authenticating certificate. If all progresses according to Craig Vetter's plans, you will have made an appreciating investment in

a piece of rolling sculpture with a Superbike soul.

Maybe that sounds too easy and proletarian for you. Okay. How about buying a kit bike from Italy? The put-it-together-yourself Bimota also requires a collection of parts, including an engine, from a Kawasaki KZ1000. Could it be you have an old Z-1 lying about, down at the far end of your seven-car garage? Understand this: there are no real Bimota dealers or distributors in this country. Heavy-hitters deal direct, so have your bilingual secretary call Bimota in Rimini, Italy [Telephone: (0541) 770369]. Assuming you need the security of dealing with someone here, try KT Engineering in San Francisco [(415) 873-8412]. That's where our unit came from. By the time your man-servant mates the bucks-up rolling chassis to the necessary Kawasaki parts, you're into a five-figure motorcycle that has its treads on the street but its heart at the racetrack.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE HAWKINS, ROBIN RIGGS

Here's how to make $20,000 disappear faster than you can say "It Was Only Money." Buy one of Craig Vetter's Mystery Ships and then build a Bimota KB1—two bikes united by KZ1000 power and redline price tags. The Good Ship Mystery is a product of American Superbike racing and a Craig Vetter vision, whereas the Bimota is simply a result of Italian national instinct: red, loud and functional.

THE GOLD DUST CHALLENGE

These two motorcycles are united by price and Kawasaki power. There the similarities end, the Mystery Ship stamped "Only in America" and the Bimota KB1 imprinted "Over There."

On first impression the Mystery Ship presents itself as a styling exercise—something prevalent in the American transportation marketplace. The Mystery Ship, not unlike the Pontiac Trans-Am, shows that function is becoming a necessary ally to form because knowledgeable buyers demand real performance beneath stylish trappings. Like the Trans-Am, the Mystery Ship appeals to a characteristically American set, that hot-car generation wanting refined performance with taste and dress—but in the American idiom. Craig Vetter has sought to combine the hard lessons of the Superbike scene with his own personal vision of a high-performance motorcycle.

Bimota's KB1 comes at you from the opposite end of the spectrum. Where the Mystery Ship catches your eye with its styling, the Bimota openly displays function. The KB1 is a soul-mate with early-1960s sports cars. In that era the best hardware, in Lotus Super Seven tradition, honored function first and second, and the purpose of the bodywork was to stretch over and cover the functioning pieces. It's hard to think of the KB1 as styled; for the most part it's just red, loud and there.

What can you afford to be happy? That's a good question because you're paying a lot to get cheerful. One might have a difficult time identifying the traits of the Mystery Ship that lead to one's happiness, or seeing them all as noncontradictory. On one hand, the M-Ship is a Vetter art form; on the other hand, beneath the fiberglass the hardware suggests the capability to go so fast in a nonchalant way as to place the rolling sculpture in real jeopardy. That suggestion of super-performance, strengthened by the M-Ship's modified chassis, magnesium wheels, lay-down shocks and all other assorted go-fast techno-ware, makes you wonder exactly what Craig Vetter had in mind.

If there was some performing-arts confusion at the Mystery camp, there was only single-track thinking in Rimini. What you get with the KB1 jumps out and grabs the stitching of your KR repli-leathers and says, "Damn the boulevard! Fast corner ahead!" Every detail, except the alloy parts, is painted bright red, making obscurity an impossibility. You might as well have your license taped to your face-shield if you ride the KB1 on a public street. The monoshock frame, Brembo magnesium calipers, 38mm Marzocchi fork and magnesium Campagnolo wheels are all direct spin-offs of present Grand Prix technology. What you get for your ten grand is one thing: a serious go-fast weapon for riding.

We picked up the Bimota in kit form, sans engine and electrics, all of which should come from a pre-1979 Kawasaki. We installed a stock, slightly used KZ1000 engine, which was then tweaked in two ways. We fitted a set of 29mm Mikuni Smoothbore carburetors and juggled the cam timing to maximize the Smoothbores' effectiveness. Because the Smoothbores will flow more air, the camshafts were degreed so that the intake valves opened a little earlier than normal to improve combustion chamber filling. Retarding the exhaust cam produced more valve overlap, thus allowing the engine to take advantage of the kit-supplied four-into-one exhaust system. The main benefit of the collector system lies in its scavenging effect, the ability to draw intake air into the chamber while the intake and exhaust valves are open together. The carb-and-cam modifications, together with the pipe, give the KZ1000 engine a horsepower boost. Unfortunately, with either stock or Smoothbore carburetors, the air cleaner becomes history.

The Bimota's most outstanding feature is its frame. Created from chrome-moly tubing, the frame envelops the engine on its way from the steering head to the swing-arm pivot in a rational maze of no less than 14 tubes. There's a curious thing about these tubes: most aren't very straight; in fact the main tube from the steering head to the swing-arm pivot has an off-center bend of over 11 inches. Those educated at The School of The Way Things Should Be might predict that the Bimota would be a wobbly disaster, but the nay-sayers would be farther from the truth than they ever thought possible. The only thing *Cycle* has ever tried in the KB1's league is the Bimota SB2 (September 1978). For handling, nothing else is close to the Kawasaki-Bimota.

The hanging engine bolts rigidly to the frame, thus utilizing the crankcase as a stressed member. Bimota has not spared tubes or welds in pursuit of strength. For example, the rear engine mount is not a tab welded to the frame but a jointed abutment that becomes an integral part of the main tube. A half circle is cut from the main tube leading forward from the swing-arm pivot to the steering head, and a wall abutment tube welded in, thus spreading the load in the joint and locking the engine in place in a way a simple tab cannot do.

Alloy eccentrics carry the swing-arm pivot, an arrangement that allows the rider to raise and lower the pivot point of the swing arm, in turn varying the ride height. We couldn't experiment with ride-height variations because moving the swing-arm-pivot point from its six o'clock position caused the chain to come into contact with the frame.

The KB1 has a single automotive-type shock, and the swing arm provides two pickup holes for that shock. As delivered, the aft end of the shock was bolted into the rear swing-arm pickup. That position gave the lowest ride height, and consequently the tire would contact the bottom of the seat, limiting rear-wheel travel. You could dial more spring preload into the monoshock, but as hard as the KB1 rides, the last thing you want is less travel. We moved the shock to the forward pickup point, getting more height by dropping the swing arm.

This chrome-moly arm is a box-section piece—light and strong. Incidentally, the KB1 frame and swing-arm arrangement is far more conventional than that of the SB2 Bimota we rode two years ago. Beautifully executed, though seen before, are the eccentric adjusters that carry the rear axle. This system makes it impossible to misalign the rear wheel when making chain adjustments.

As on the SB2, detail abounds on the KB1. From the windscreen-cap screws to the intricate gearshift linkage to the hand-milled rear caliper carrier, expense was not a consideration. The fairing mounts to the bike at eight places; the fairing's side screws thread directly into the main frame tubes. This last trick means, we think, that inserts were pressed inside the frame tubes before the tubes were bent. And the welding. The KB1 is a tribute to the welder's art. Building these mazelike frames must be an enormous task—the sheer number of perfect welds tells you that loud and clear.

If you look closely, you'll notice the folded foot-rests in the rear of the tail section. You'll also notice a horizontal line extending to the rear at the seat-cushion level. A Dzus fastener releases the monoposto seat to make way for a dual-seat which likewise snaps in. We didn't get the dual-saddle and wouldn't know how comfortable it might be. But the duo-option makes a nice touch for those with fearless friends.

Close observers will catch the rubber donut-bumpers on the fork tubes; at full lock they work as fork stops against the frame, the tubes of which are notched at the bumper-contact-points to provide more lock. Here again, The-Way-Things-Should-Be-Crowd will gasp in horror at those notches set into the frame. If you wonder at such a move, look at front-line Superbikes at an AMA national. These motorcycles have notched swing-arm tubes for rear-tire clearance, and their lap times indicate they handle very well, notches and all.

The Mystery Ship's papers trace back to American Superbike racing. Craig Vetter, known by his Windjammer to motorcyclists everywhere, sold the fairing business a while back. To develop his M-Ship concept has been a constant dream for years, and this led Craig into Superbike racing, where the Vetter team became a major force.

Kawasaki's KZ1000 is the starting point for the Mystery Ship. Vetter's in-


bimota


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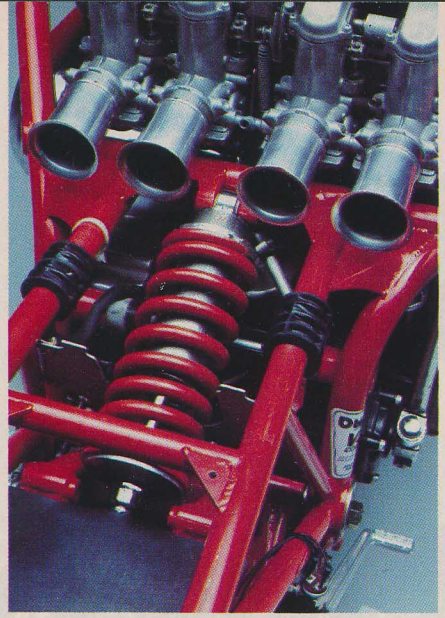
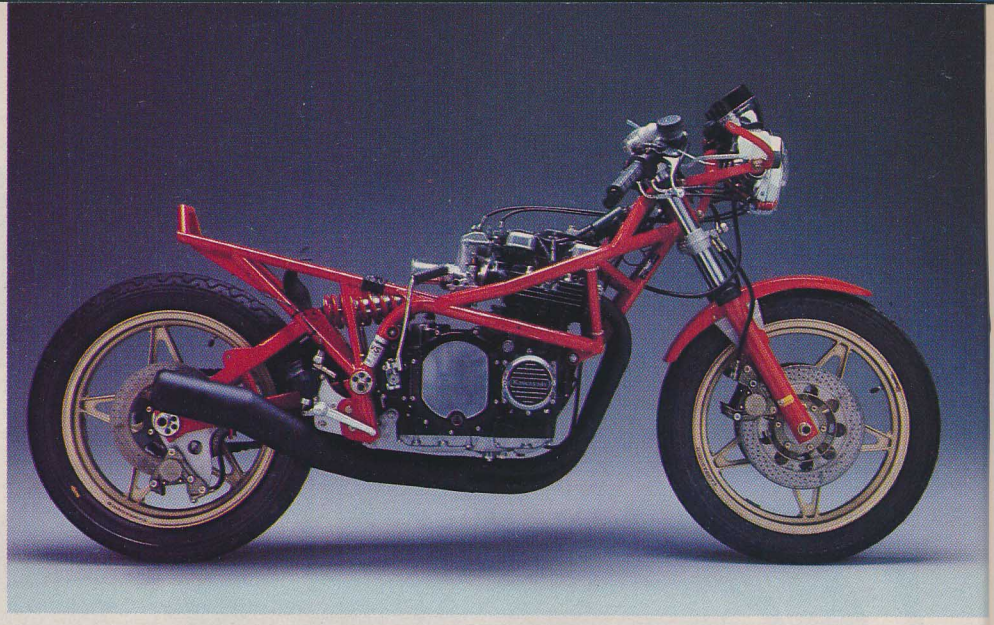




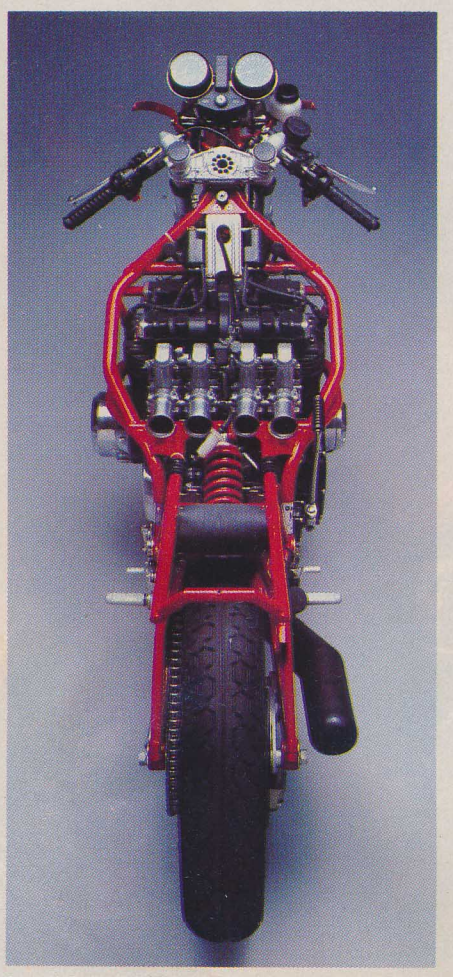
THE GOLD DUST CHALLENGE

volvement with two-time AMA Superbike champion Reg Pridmore made the Kawasaki an obvious choice; with KZ racing success came a body of knowledge about making the big Kawasaki suitable for high-speed track work. Tuner/builder Pierre DesRoches spent many a long night getting Z-1s to handle on the racetrack, and a lot of what he learned was used in principle in the modification of the standard chassis.

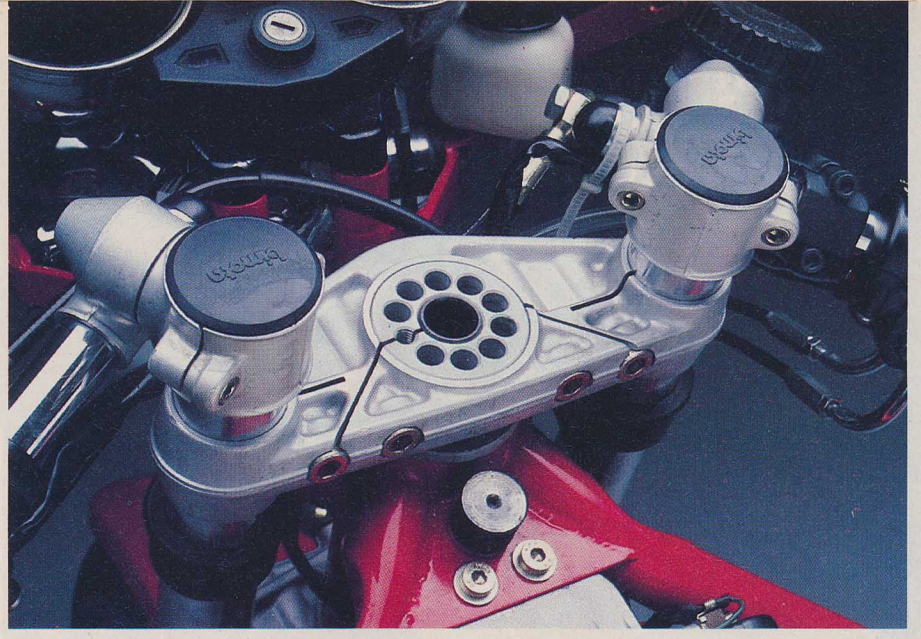
A Mystery Ship begins with the complete disassembly of a stock KZ1000. After removing the steering neck from the frame, technicians weld a new one—with special tapered rollers—back on in the center of the frame tubes at 26 degrees from vertical. This angle is slightly steeper than stock, and, of course, it's no longer a secret that the stock Kawasaki KZ1000 does not carry its front and rear wheel in perfect alignment. Behind the steering head the frame is highly triangulated to keep the steering neck and the swing-arm pivot axle in precise relationship to one another, even under load.

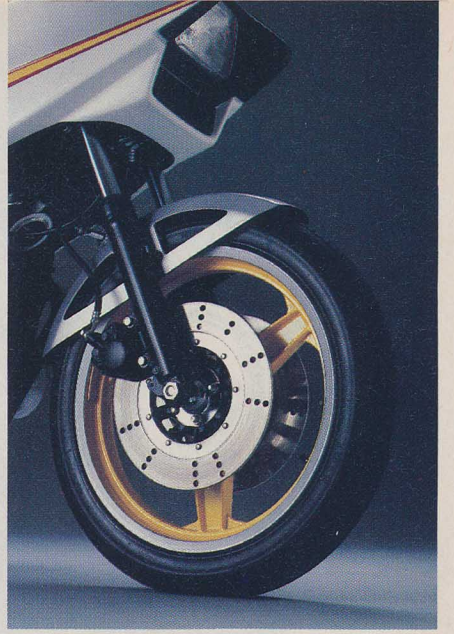
Vetter's bike builders notch the standard swing arm (for tire clearance) and box it to increase the arm's torsional rigidity. Mulholland Force 1 shocks control the rear end; the top shock mounts on the frame have been repositioned forward to increase rear-wheel travel.

The standard Kawasaki fork has one addition: aftermarket air caps. Unfortunately there's no interconnecting air hose to make the fork tubes a common air chamber. This would greatly ease the accurate matching of the air pressure in each fork leg, something that can be very frustrating.



(Upper left) Bimota's monoshock has eight-position damping and ring-screw preload adjuster system. (Above) Frame uses engine as stressed member; KB1 has no dead space anywhere. (Above right) KB1 abounds with complex, intricate, functional parts. Bars, despite adjustability, couldn't fit riders. (Far right) M-Ship has painted Dymag on stock fork mechanicals. (Left) KB1's load path between shock and steering head is indirect; KB1 still handles! (Right) Ship from above is tight and tidy. (Far right) Number signifies fourth unit built.





Standard calipers with the addition of Ferodo pads take care of stopping the motorcycle. Magnesium Dymag wheels, WM4 front, WM5 rear, carry Michelin tires, an S 41 (PZ 2 compound) in front and a M 48 at the rear.

A short, BMW-type touring handlebar matches the riding position which the seat, rear-set footpegs and levers create. The brake pedal is a shortened KZ item, while heim-jointed linkage handles the gear shifting.

The two-pieces of the bodywork join together at the front of the fuel tank. The rear half can be pulled off easily after removing two six-millimeter screws and unsnapping one plastic Dzus-type fastener. Lifting off the rear shell gives access to the battery, air filter and other often-serviced items. To change spark plugs, however, you must remove the aluminum six-gallon tank which rests on the frame, retained by fairing-bracket overlap in front and a rubber band-type strap at the rear.

Velcro strips hold on the leather-covered seat. Though at first the attachment method seems marginal, experience demonstrated that the seat wasn't going anywhere. Beneath the seat is a rather large storage area, large enough for the Kawasaki-supplied tool kit, a pair of gloves and a well-folded lightweight jacket. Preferably the storage area would be lockable; anything left in the parked Mystery Ship is only a fraction of a second from theft.

The forward half of the bodywork houses a very effective Bosch quartz-halogen light, and below the light is a chin-mounted Lockhart oil cooler. Small,

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Gold Dust *Continued from page 57*

plastic screws attach the windscreen to the body; a more effective retaining system should be used because the two center screws continually worked loose, straining on the two outer ones.

Both the M-ship and the KB1 tout performance, in their styling and in their specifications. As a rule, we do not take street bikes to the racetrack. Bear in mind that for normal street bikes the racetrack is an unreal environment; high-performance street motorcycles aren't designed and engineered for journalists who are aspiring racers. But the Bimota and Mystery Ship present themselves as racers with treads. To skirt the racetrack, in view of the presentations, would be a disservice to our curiosity—and our readers. Furthermore, previous experience with the Bimota Suzuki SB2 reminded us that trying to find the limit of such a motorcycle on the street is about as safe as climbing Mt. St. Helens during an eruption. And about as smart.

Willow Springs International Raceway is located in the Mojave desert, about 90 miles north of Los Angeles. It rests at the foothills of the Tehachapi Mountains and twists its way over 2.5 miles of hot, bumpy and greasy asphalt. In the words of Kenny Roberts during a test session at Ontario International Raceway (Ontario, California), "Let's take this thing to Willow and see how it *really* handles!"

We started out with 28 psi (cold tire pressure) in the front of both bikes and 30 psi in the rear tires. After we took a few laps on both bikes, it became apparent that the rear tires had too much pressure. Both bikes would slide their back tires rather suddenly, with little warning. Lowering the pressure to 28 psi cold made the tires easier to read, and that made hard riding a more comfortable proposition.

First out was the Mystery Ship. The first and most noticeable thing was the excessive stiffness of its rear shocks. They would move freely for about the first inch and one-half; at that point the spring rate rose so suddenly and dramatically it felt as if the shocks were bottoming. Of course, they weren't; the shocks had just compressed to the point of massive resistance. After five laps, this problem, compounded by excessive damping fade, had the Mystery Ship oscillating like a windup John Travolta doll. After 20 minutes of this we brought the bike in and changed to a pair of S&W Street Stroker freon cell shocks in an effort to isolate further the motorcycle's handling problems. With the S&Ws the Mystery Ship behaved a little better once the rear got under control, allowing us to concentrate on other areas.

The front fork worked well as a suspension unit, soaking up the many well-pronounced bumps at Willow Springs. The front-end problem was not related to the fork assembly itself. On our particular

Mystery Ship (number four) the steering head location needed further refinement. The steering head on Reg Pridmore's championship Superbike was centered and re-angled *and* relocated higher in the frame tubes than was the case with our test unit. The elevation change in the head placed more weight on the front wheel. This modification was omitted on the Mystery Ship. Together with the rearward seating position that omission creates a problem: great vagueness in front-end feedback to the rider. The Mystery Ship wouldn't push the front end in the sense of understeer, but then again the bike wouldn't push back with any message of front tire loading. Consequently, entries into corners while braking become unpleasant if you value the importance of traction feedback.

The Good Ship M has better ground clearance than a standard KZ does, but track riding will cause solid things to drag on the ground. When going right, you'll only touch down the footpeg, which nicks at about the time the rear tire is down to faint trails of traction. On the left, more care must be taken; the first things to touch will be the unyielding alternator cover on the engine and the likewise solid sidestand boss on the frame.

Next was the Bimota. Would all of its tony technical credentials add up to success? The answer is an unclouded *yes*. Understand that the Bimota, as well as the M-Ship, was ridden on street tires throughout road and track evaluations; mounting road-racing slicks on these bikes might have uncovered some otherwise hidden quirks. In the case of KB1, we doubt it.

The KB1 exhibits neutral handling characteristics right up to the tire limits, where the rather hard Michelin M 48 rear tire starts to break away. The Bimota actually shows a bit of its monoshock heritage, displaying many of the same handling traits of a Yamaha TZ750, the current race bike of one of our editors. The Bimota has the same willingness as the big TZ to turn when under very hard braking, something that seems characteristic of an extremely rigid monoshock frame that gets very steep front end geometry under heavy braking. There is an interesting aside to this. The Bimota SB2, tested in *Cycle*, September 1978, exhibited the opposite behavior, tending to go straight when riders combined hard braking and turning.

One of the really nice things about the Bimota is its light steering. Changing direction requires very little effort. If you are in a hard right turn and need to follow with a hard left, all it takes is a slight tug at the bars, and there you are. The Bimota KB1 never displays any tendency to over- or under-amplify any rider input; the bike always settles into whatever lean angle the rider specifies. Once there, the rider needs only to guide the motorcycle by a light touch on the handlebar. We really enjoyed this characteristic; most motorcycles as steady in a fast corner as the Bimota is end up being real trucks to ride in slow corners. Not so with the KB1; it was as good at 25 mph as it was at 125 mph: faultless.

After a day of Willow's sweltering 100-degree heat, we headed down to Orange County International drag strip to quantify differences in straight-line performance. Clearly differences in weight and engine tune would become apparent. While the Bimota's engine had been tweaked in specific ways mentioned earlier, the Mystery Ship four-cylinder was stone-stock except for the Yoshimura pipe supplied with every M-Ship. For more performance beyond the $10,000 base, you can, bankroll permitting, get anything in Yoshimura-modified engines. In fact, Vetter can set you up with a turbocharged Kawasaki should your ego need it and your wallet handle it.

The first run belonged to the "base" Mystery Ship. Here, once again, the hardness of the M 48 tire made getting a good launch difficult. Lowering the tire pressure to 20 psi made getting off the line much easier. If the rider eased the clutch out during the first 15 feet, then released, the M-Ship could be marched down to a low 12-second run: our best time was 12.32 seconds at 109.1 mph. The last (standard, chain drive, carbureted) KZ1000 tested by *Cycle* yielded a run at 12.65 seconds at 105.75 mph, and our fuel-injected Classic (May 1980) cut the lights at 12.34 seconds at 108.41 mph. Each time the Mystery Ship left the line, the engine would develop a terrible lean stutter. A standard KZ1000 doesn't have this problem, at least not to the same extent that the M-Ship does. With the four-into-one exhaust, the standard EPA-mandated jetting mixes insufficient fuel into the air stream to make the engine run acceptably during drag strip acceleration. This also became a problem when the bike was started in the morning. It needed the choke for the first five minutes of the ride.

Before we rode the Bimota, we dropped its tire pressure to 20 psi. Instead of spinning the tires as the M-Ship does, the Bimota tried to stand on its rear wheel. The same starting technique as applied to the M-Ship was needed here. Once launched correctly, the Bimota really began to fly. You wouldn't notice the extra performance for the first eighth-mile, but as the bike approached the traps, things started going by in a big hurry. Previous experience with the same engine mods indicated that there would be a gain in mid-range performance. So it was. The KB1's best run was 11.52 seconds at 119.50 mph.

We attribute the added performance of the Bimota to three things. First, the engine benefited from the cam-tweak and Smoothbores; obviously the KB1

(Continued on page 80)

Gold Dust *Continued from page 79*

four-cylinder was horsepower-up on the Mystery Ship. Second, the 475-pound Bimota is 59 pounds lighter than the 534-pound Mystery Ship. Third, the Bimota has greater streamlining and a much smaller frontal area. This last point squares nicely with the higher trap speed attained by the Bimota.

So much for the track testing. Back on the highways and interstates and mountain roads we could get an idea of what it would be like to live with these high-rollers on a day-to-day basis, away from the sharp intensity of the racetrack.

In the comfort department the Mystery Ship wins hands down on the open road simply because the Bimota KB1 will—in about 20 minutes of straight-line droning—have you screaming for your masseur or masseuse. The KB1 has you shifting and wriggling after you get through the first three gears, looking for that comfortable position that just cannot be found. Once in the mountains, you become so engrossed in the riding that you don't notice your discomfort; but you *are* uncomfortable, and later your head will know what your body has suffered.

We spent quite a while trying to adjust the Bimota's clip-ons—to no avail. If you get them far enough back to be halfway comfortable, they come into unharmonious contact with the fuel tank. A slight reshape of the tank would help.

The Bimota fairing is designed very much like the current crop of road race envelopes. This has its own set of racing side-effects. The heat that comes pouring back out of this fairing on the rider is almost unbearable. It has you checking to see if your shins are on fire. Some internal ducting is desperately needed in the fairing to channel some of this heat away from the rider.

The Mystery Ship hasn't a heat problem. Its fairing/bodywork does an excellent job of keeping heat away from the rider, making it cooler to ride than a standard KZ in the California summer. Staffers liked the handlebar/foot-control relationship, but on the road the seat position seems too far rearward. This created a lower back soreness in staffers under five-ten. The seat provides one pocket for all, and that pocket isn't cushy in current terms of Japanese big bikes. The rearward riding position tends to exacerbate the vagueness in handling feedback at the handlebar, the feeling that the front tire carries little weight and is planted lightly on the tarmac.

As we spent more time on the Mystery Ship, we started to notice a rather peculiar trait: the bike handled better when turning to the right than to the left. That led us to pull out our Henter wheel alignment tool and check the wheel alignment. It was off. The rear wheel wasn't cocked in the swing arm; but the center of the rear wheel was about a quarter of an inch off to the right of the front wheel,

Information Service

How To Find What You Saw And Liked

Cycle Reader Brochure Service

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causing the obvious handling difficulties. Obviously the builders got the wheel offset wrong, probably by mislocating the rear wheel on our unit.

The Bimota had its share of on-street difficulties. It was as comfortable as a concrete-mixer truck, with springing to match. We spent some time trying to soften the ride, but it couldn't be done. The gas-filled DeCarbon rear shock operates at a rather high pressure, and despite adjustable damping, the pressure and stiff springing makes cushy cruising impossible. On the bigger bumps the Bimota suspension was fine, but when you got on the freeway, its suspension was as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.

Both bikes subject their riders to excessive wind turbulence around the helmet area. As a rule, most *Cycle* staff members wear ear plugs when riding; nevertheless, the wind-drumming caused is very annoying, forcing the rider to search for a way to sit that will put him in smoother air. The only workable position is standing up, certainly not a way to ride a $10,000 motorcycle.

For everyday use, The Mystery Ship is functionally superior to the Bimota KB1. No surprise, really. the Mystery Ship remains much closer to a standard-type motorcycle than does the KB1, and, in fact, neither the Mystery Ship nor the Bimota KB1 works as well as a perfectly standard KZ1000 for day-in/day-out motorcycling. A lot of money may buy artwork, or superior function in a very narrow channel, but nowhere is it written that ten grand buys a better all-round motorcycle than $3500 does.

We would like to see the Bimota KB1 in a slightly different configuration. In our book, the fairing would have to go. Sure it's nice and sure it provides suitable mounting places for two small batteries (there's no other place to put the wet cells on the highly compact Bimota). Still, why be cooked medium-rare on your high-buck street bike? Optional springs for the rear shock are needed, together with a handy way to vary the rear-unit gas pressure. American clientele, we believe, would like to sit up straighter, in a more conventional position, and this would require a higher, wider bar. Furthermore, the Bimota kit strategy doesn't make it. Bimota needs someone to turn the kits into completed motorcycles.

Finally, maybe the Bimota should come with its own insurance policy for the rider/owner. As a single-purpose, narrow-spectrum motorcycle for ultra-fast riding, the KB1 is so good that expert riders, we fear, will naturally explore what this motorcycle can do. And on fast, sweeping roads the KB1 can do so much that in time an expert rider could find himself riding at velocities incompatible with public roads and everyday hazards.

If you can afford to have The Real Thing—without wanting to use it and exploit it, if you just want the finest piece of go-fast crafting this side of a Yamaha TZ750, and if you can afford to indulge yourself; refer back to the telephone number in Rimini.

Maybe art interests you more than go-fast equipment, relative comfort more than speed, reasonable usability more than unyielding speciality. In that case, try the Mystery Ship. As his bike has evolved, Craig Vetter has talked more and more about the Mystery Ship as art. That strikes us as intelligent, because the present Mystery Ship mechanicals have their base in 1978–1979 Superbike racing. Manufacturers themselves make real progress, and in 1981 we'll very likely see the first monoshocked roadburners, which may show what manufacturers have learned from the Superbike wars, or what they're prepared to build to get competitive. Manufacturers can do great technological leap-frogs that can carry them far beyond the capabilities of the Mystery Ship mechanicals. But no manufacturer, we think, will dispute Vetter's ground in Ship-Art.

So there you have it. Ten grand for a projectile or ten grand for art. Those are the answers we have for you. All you have to answer are three little questions:

What do you want?
Can you afford it?
And, are you well? ◉