

FOR AGES FOUR TO SEVEN

ITALJET M5C BRAVE

Shiftless wonder

By The Dirt Bike Staff

What's the first thing you think of when somebody mentions the term "Pee Wee"?

If you're like most motorcyclists, you thought of two things. One: little kids out bashing around a mini track; and two: ItalJet.

The reason for thinking of ItalJet is that they have been making nothing but minicycles and mini-racers for years, and they literally dominate the Pee Wee ranks. The ItalJet brand is the favorite among parents who want to start Junior out young in racing and riding, for the simple fact that they have something that will be just right, and not too much, for the tyke who's just getting out of his Pampers and into a set of leathers.

One of the most popular beginner bikes sold at ItalJet is the tiny M5C "Brave," built specifically for the four- to seven-year age group. This miniature machine is a single-speed 50cc minicrosser, with an automatic transmission and clutch, in a very mild powerplant.

The little Brave sits only 29 inches high, and weighs in at an incredibly light 66 pounds. This combination of measurements, with the mild automatic 49.6cc engine, equals one motorcycle that a youngster can get on, ride and feel confident on in his learning stages. And when he goes down, the kid can get right back up and pick the bike up himself, without any help from the spectators.

Taking a glance at the ItalJet M5C reveals a few interesting statistics about this mini-bike that set it up at the top of a parent's first-bike list. The rims are only 10-inchers, and the ground clearance a mere 5.5 inches, which means that just about any four-year-old will be able to touch the ground with his hooves. The kickstarter is long and offers a lot of leverage for short legs, and the controls are all at the handlebars, so a little kid doesn't have to be confused about which is the brake, shifter, clutch and throttle. Both brakes are hand-lever-operated, with cables leading down to the conical hubs, where the expanding shoes rest inside. The throttle is semi-quick, but doesn't burst the power on



Bradley D. flies the little ItalJet M5C "Brave" through the rough, where suspension was put to the test.

at split-second speed.

To keep the operating noise down, a nylon sprocket is used, which also extends the chain life, and the exhaust pipe has been fitted with a healthy muffler.

Suspension consists of telescopic forks and spring shocks at the rear, but the saddle is a very hard plastic and doesn't absorb anything the suspension won't handle.

On the track, the little Brave is a real treat for a youngster. The automatic transmission allows easy learning, and the hand brakes keep the pilot's mind on the bars; not the pegs. The throttle

could use a little loosening up, as ours was quite stiff and unmanageable for a small hand at times.

As for starting, the long kickstarter allows a short leg to gain a bit of leverage, but the compression is too tough for some children with anything but a strong right leg.

Once under way, though, any small rider can have a blast with the ItalJet, anywhere, any time. All he has to do is con Mom and Pop into chartering an excursion out to the fields of the city.

The M5C is a great beginners bike that is easy to handle, mild and confidence-building. The sticker price is under \$500. □

KID-SIZED KLOTHING

If you plan on buying one of the mini-bikes we've been featuring each month in our new Mini section, then chances are you're also on the lookout for riding apparel as well.

Pictured are the basic protection articles for a beginning rider, keeping price tags in mind. Don't forget, when you buy a youngster something to wear, expect him to outgrow it long before it ever wears out. So, instead of going for total exotica, consider a practical outfit for your mini rider.

Starting from the top, there's the KRW children's helmet, which comes in either open or full-face coverage

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ITALJET M5C BRAVE Specifications

ENGINE TYPE Air-cooled, two-stroke, single
BORE AND STROKE	..... 38.8mm x 42mm
DISPLACEMENT	..... 49.6cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED)	..... 1.4 at 5000 rpm
CARBURETION	..... Dellorto 14.9mm
IGNITION	..... Magneto, points
TRANSMISSION	..... Single-speed automatic
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	..... 1.2
WHEELBASE	..... 31 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	..... 5.5 inches
SEAT HEIGHT	..... 29 inches
WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	..... 66 pounds
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT	..... Telescopic fork
REAR	..... Swingarm/shocks
TIRES:	
FRONT	..... 2.50x10
REAR	..... 2.50x10
INTENDED USE	..... Off-road
APPROX. RETAIL PRICE \$499
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Italy
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Strada-ItalJet	
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styles. Then there's the Team ItalJet Racing Jersey, made of nylon and nylon mesh, which sells for \$13.95. Underneath the jersey, is a pair of Pee Wee shoulder pads, designed especially for little shouldors, which go for \$15.95.

As for the leathers, instead of going out and paying \$60 to \$70 for something a child will soon outgrow, we picked the ItalJet Denims. The denims are priced at \$25, or less than half the cost of nylon pants.

The boots were the only thing that we balked at. Leather prices took a big jump at the beginning of the year, which bumped the price of the boots to \$79.95 a pair. Our recommendation is to get your little rider a pair of boots for safety, but buy them a size or two too large. You can put a few extra pairs of socks on him at first, then later he'll grow into them and you won't find yourself throwing the boots out after only a few months of riding.

The gloves pictured are the MXL children's gloves. These go for \$11.95 a pair, and come in some very small sizes for little hands.

So, whether your mini-croser rides for fun, or for competition, think seriously about getting him into basic protective apparel. It's a good way to keep him on the track and out of Band-aids. □

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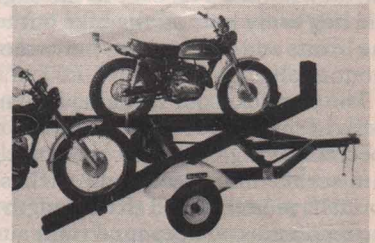
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