

There is a special little something which any product wearing the title 'Made in Italy' seems to possess. Shoes and clothes which come from that country are styled with an extra special ingredient to set them aside from others.

Italian cars have the same charismatic content allowing them to promise things which they sometimes can't achieve.

Motorcycles made in Italy have a quality all of their own. Ask anyone who has ever ridden a big Laverda what it was like. They'll say it was fast and are bound to tell you at length about the handling.

Guzzi has an appeal all of its own but arguably the best known of Italian bike builders is Ducati.

Recently its name has been linked with Cagiva. The Italian government is said to be putting up a large wad of cash to allow the Varese firm - which was founded by a couple of locksmiths - to build a new range of bikes to be powered by some of the engines currently made by Ducati.

Although at the recent Milan show Cagiva revealed a mammoth trail bike with Ducati power, it is pressing on with its own version of dirt bikes which use its own powerful two-stroke engines.

While other manufacturers sell vaguely disguised motocrossers as enduro bikes there still exist those specialist bike makers who make single purpose enduro machines. Cagiva is to be numbered among that few.

The WRX 125/1 may seem a little dated in design compared with the converted 'crossers raced at enduros these days but it possesses the power to win and in the correct hands often does.

The single cylinder power unit, liquid cooled of course, delivers its power in a very orderly manner. There is a sharp edge which when found can tip the whole machine skywards but the rider is given fair warning that this point is about to be reached. It is quite possible to poodle along on the WRX with the motor well off the boil. It does not gas itself up in the way some small capacity dirt bikes have a habit of doing.

We rode several miles with the engine deliberately off the power band to see if this was going to happen. When we decided it was not going to we changed down a couple of ratios and gassed the bike to find that, clean as a whistle, the engine pulled with just a hint of coughing as the crankcases cleared themselves.

Some vindication of the carburation settings this. We would not have been surprised to have been sidelined with a plug spanner in hand after such deliberate abuse of a racing engine.

The carburettor is a Del Orto 34mm instrument which feeds the fuel/air mixture into the crankcases via some reeds. Cagiva has the cheapest reeds going. Where after-market reeds are sold for over £10 a set Cagiva sells its at a quarter of that price!

Unfortunately other engine spares are not so competitively priced and this cost must be born in mind when thinking of buying a Cagiva enduro bike. The spares are readily available however. Cagiva UK in Birmingham, which lent DBR the WRX for test, has plenty of stock so being kept

Team DBR discovers Cagiva's WRX125 is . . .

Dated But... Dashing

waiting for parts should not be a worry to any Cagiva owner.

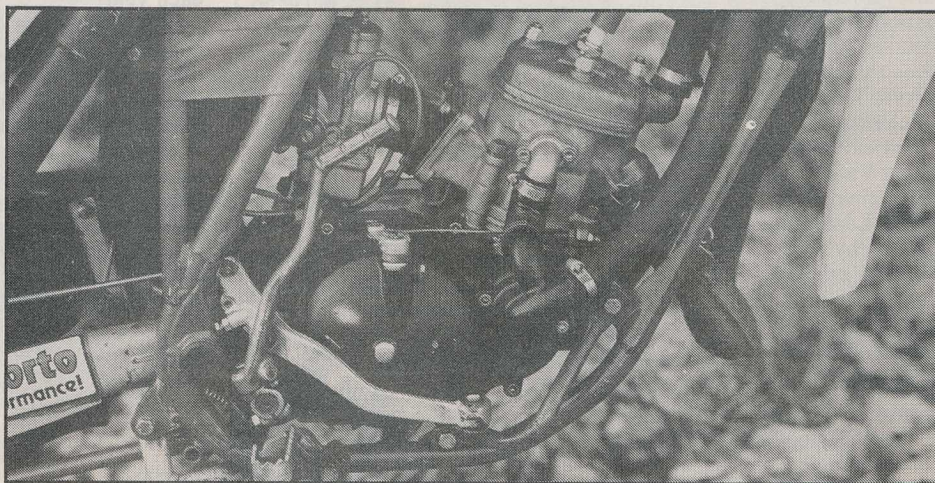
For such a high output engine, some 25bhp being available at the rear wheel, the power band is quite wide. Where other engine builders have gone for ultimate power output the Cagiva has more of a speed range to work with.

When we rode a Kawasaki KX 125 we felt the twistgrip could have been replaced with a switch! The Cagiva is not at all like that. The power is sharp but it is possible to drive the engine onto the power curve in quite a controlled manner. When it comes on song things do happen very quickly. Any bike which is powered by an engine developing 200bhp/litre is going to be fast and the Cagiva is no exception. With fuel and oil the bike weighs just 100kg and so with 25bhp to power it the sensation is rather like riding a rocket.

The front forks, 38mm Marzocchis with magnesium sliders, are quite rigid in operation but having said that they work very well. We did find their feel a little harsh at first but soon got used to that and when the bike is raced the speed soon takes account of the harshness which is as much a function of the light weight of the bike as of any incorrect spring selection.

The frame is a well made affair. It's a twin cradle item with adequate strength to withstand the rigours of enduro competition. By providing 355mm (14 inches) of ground clearance the frame carries the engine quite high up. The effect of this on the ride and handling of the bike can't be faulted.

The extensive use of alloys and plastic in the engine's manufacture ensures that, although positioned high, the centre of gravity is quite small. Had the engine been



Based on the 125 motocross engine the WRX power unit develops a healthy 25bhp at 10,600rpm.

An essential feature of a very light and powerful bike is its suspension. The traction which the suspension provides can be the difference between winning an event and getting blown off.

The one area where the WRX is lacking is its rear suspension. Cagiva does make a rising rate rear end which is seen on most of its bikes now, including the trail bikes, so it can only be a matter of time before the Soft Damp is fitted to its enduro machines.

During a session on a frozen hard track the shortcoming of the twin shock rear suspension was apparent. The rear wheel tended to bounce slightly more than was comfortable and on a couple of occasions we nearly lost the back of the bike when powering out of turns. Had the suspension been more progressive this would not have occurred.

heavier such a high C of G would be a problem.

When enduro racing the special tests are the place where the Cagiva WRX 125 can be expected to excel. By being quite forgiving the engine allows you to give more attention to the ideal line to place the bike on, without having to worry that it's in exactly the correct gear to be right on the bottom edge of the power band when the throttle is snapped open. As soon as the power band is reached it's essential to work the gear change rapidly. The engine speed rises very quickly and so slick gear operation is essential.

The WRX's gear cluster, a six speeder, can be shifted quite happily without use of the clutch. As long as the power is momentarily shut off the gear lever can be pushed through the gate to engage the next ratio.



Shortcomings of the twin shock rear suspension manifested themselves on a frozen hard track.



Made in Italy but the WRX doesn't win in the fashion stakes. But its a winner on speed!

Flat out with the stock gearing the bike does about 76mph. So you're not going to be left behind on a WRX.

Comfort is spoiled by the harsh rear suspension and it's quite important that an enduro machine be comfortable to ride in order that on the occasions when it's possible to relax between special stages or when dashing along hard metalled track some relief from the rigours of the enduro can be gained.

Is the WRX worth buying? Well we think it is. Although some slight improvement could result from a different rear suspension system, the whole package which the WRX provides make it an attractive enduro package. In sand or mud it's excellent and as long as you keep the throttle well open you'll not be passed by many other 125s. We loved it.

SPECIFICATIONS

Price (inc VAT).....	£1,483 (inc taxes)
Engine	Single cyl. reed valve 2-stroke
Bore x stroke.....	50 x 50.6mm
Capacity	124.63cc
Comp. ratio.....	16.2:1
Carburation.....	Del Orto PHBE 34 RD
Ignition	Motoplat electronic
Air filter.....	Wet foam
Oil capacity	750ccm
Max power	25.2bhp @ 10,600rpm
Max torque.....	n/a
Clutch	wet multi-plate
Primary drive	gear
Gearbox.....	6-speed
Sparkplug	Champion N84-G

CYCLE PARTS

Tryes	Pirelli Sandcross
Front.....	3.00 x 21
Rear	4.00 x 18
Brakes	
Front	125mm drum
Rear	125mm drum
Suspension	
Front.....	Marzocchi 38ZTI-PA telescopic forks 11.8 inches travel
Rear	Swing arm with twin Corte-Cosso hydro-pneumatic shocks 11.2 inches travel

DIMENSIONS

Weight (dry).....	97kg
Wheelbase.....	1475mm
Seat height.....	960mm
Ground clearance.....	355mm
Fuel capacity	8.5 litres

SPARE PART PRICES

(ex VAT)	
Air filter	£11.41
Piston kit.....	£45.75
Rings only.....	£16.75
Cylinder Head 'O' rings	£2.28 (inner) £2.66 (outer)
Rear sprocket.....	£25.86
Exhaust pipe..... exp chamber	£88.03
Silencer tail pipe	£79.10
Rear mudguard.....	£8.82
Radiator assembly.....	£161.97

Supplied by Cagiva UK Ltd.,
Factory Road, Hockley
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