

# Moto-Gori TR 250/81

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BEING DEEPLY involved in the motorcycle trade both as a rider and journalist has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, when one of my friends decided to import a racing bike and asked me to test it the exercise was fraught with danger. Telling him that he had just made a big mistake was likely to cause some strain in the relationship, to say the least.

However, I need not have worried, for after riding the first prototype Moto-Gori which came into the country I fell in love with the bike and immediately wanted to ride one on a regular basis.

Jim Jones, the importer, sold me a bike and we should have been set for a good season since the bike suited me perfectly and it was a dream to ride.

On my first outing I managed a Silver medal despite getting the Gori stuck in a stream right in the middle of the special test, and shortly afterwards I won the 250cc class at the Hawk 100. After this things never seemed to go right. I had a spate of injuries and a mountain of professional problems which killed my desire to go racing.

Meanwhile, Jim was doing very well with his new product and it rapidly became one of the best-selling of the specialist enduro bikes, rightly earning a reputation for being a very easy bike on which to ride fast.

With the volatile state of the Italian motorcycle industry it is difficult to predict how long Moto-Gori will remain on the scene, but I will remember my 250 with great fondness. It was deadly fast and trustworthy as well, which is one of the best combinations one can hope for in a racing bike.

Other contractual commitments prevented me from riding a Gori for a second season, a fact which saddened me, since I feel that even at the



**The Gori's SWM-developed Rotax was outstandingly the best 250cc unit of its time. In the Gori version, it was not only very powerful but had an extremely wide spread of power.**

**The most rapid 250 of its day and a real handful in careless hands.**









**The first prototype Gori tested by the author in 1979, a year before the bike went into production.**

**The Gori was very sensitive to rider position. Ridden with skill, it was a dream. Handled carelessly, it had a mind of its own. The author loved riding it.**

end of my riding career I could still have managed one or two good results on this bike.

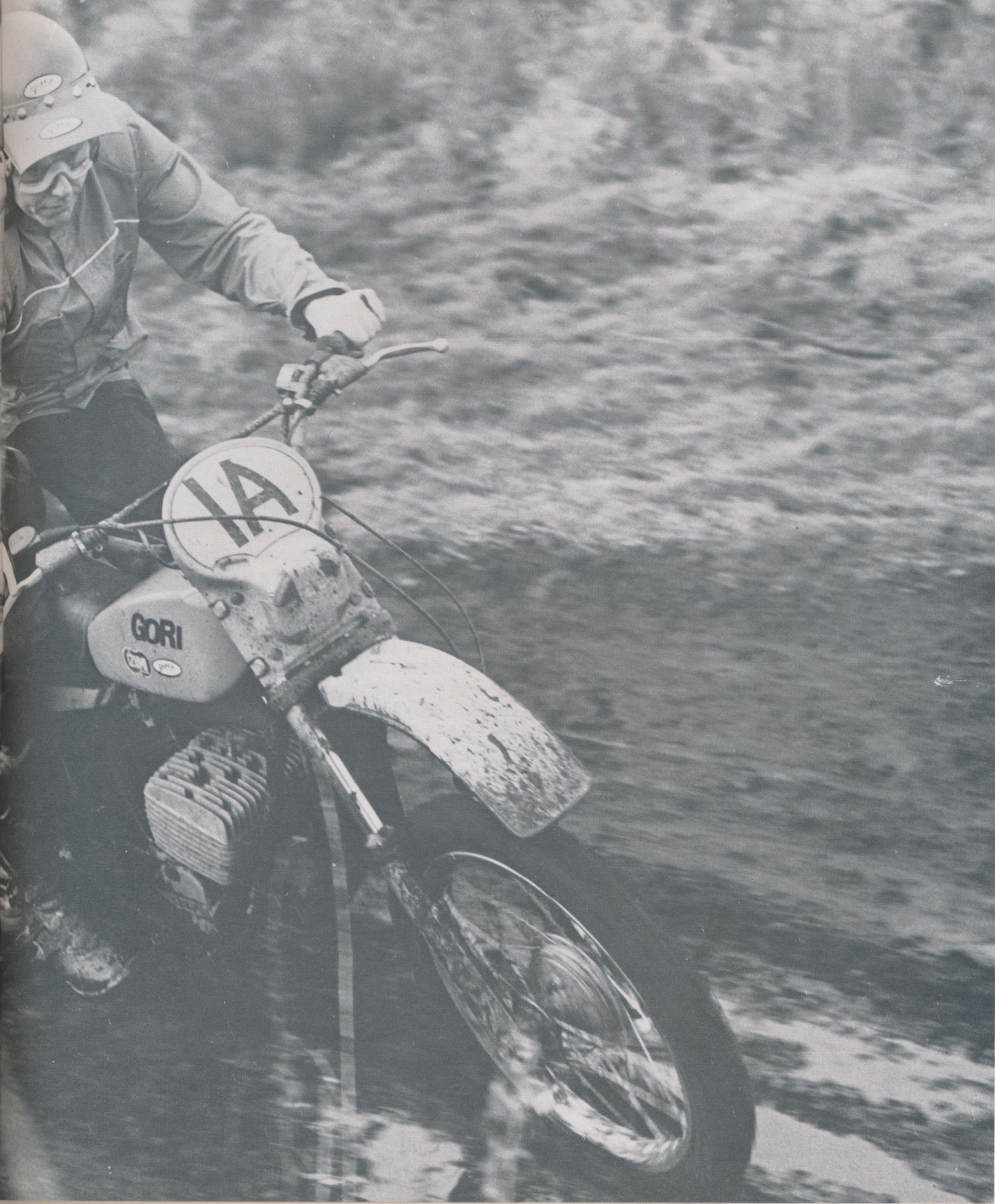
That the name Moto-Gori was unheard of at the start of the 1979 season and is now one of the best-selling of the specialist enduro bikes is a credit to the efforts of the marque's enthusiastic importer, Jim Jones. But enthusiasm and energy are not enough to sell a specialized racing bike to a very knowledgeable and critical clientele: the bike has to be good too! A glance around any *parc fermé* will reveal that, for many serious enduro riders, Moto-Gori is the way to success.

The most important thing to remember about a Gori is that it is a thoroughbred racing machine. This fact is reflected in its handling, performance and price. As a dual-purpose play bike the Gori is a disaster: it needs, and demands, to be raced.

Powering the Gori is SWM's own version of the well-known Rotax 250cc engine. The disc-valved motor is outstandingly the best 250 enduro engine in the world, with a power output and flexibility









that every other manufacturer is still trying to match. I have raced the Gori on several occasions and have yet to find a need for more power. Other 250s get eaten alive and very few 500s can live with the bike either.

Credit must go to SWM, whose own tuning has got the best out of the basic Rotax engine. If it seems a strange situation that SWM should provide power plants to a competitor, then it must be remembered that Signor Sironi, who owns SWM, also has a half-share in Moto-Gori, along with the company's founder, Giancarlo Gori.

SWM are also responsible for the use of the five-speed gearbox in this motor. The five-speeder is fine for a top expert, since, with 38bhp on tap, there is ample power to accelerate between gears. However, for a geriatric clubman like myself, the five-speeder has a rather high first gear. Jim lowered the gearing on his own bike by two teeth and reported it to be much livelier, but I still prefer to use a highish top in order to give the motor a bit of a rest on fast sections. I am sure that I am not alone in hoping that SWM will revert to a six-speed cluster.

The gearchange is not the best in the world, with a potential for missing the occasional gear, but it is not a dramatic problem. I miss two or three an hour, usually in the lower ratios, which, whilst mildly irritating, is more than made up for by the fact that, given any degree of courage or skill on the part of the rider, one can burn off everything in sight.

Matters are not helped by a very heavy clutch. It never slips or drags, but one really needs to be first cousin to Guy the Gorilla to use it regularly. I hardly ever change gear using the clutch and the box never complains.

Carburettor variations abound on the Rotax engine. The Gori 250s sport a very nice Dell'Orto, which gives a clean response throughout the range and a pleasing petrol consumption in the high 20s.

If the motor is familiar, then the chassis is most certainly not. I think that we have become too indoctrinated by the Japanese style of engineering, which demands a very rigid frame controlled by a



**Not a surrogate SWM by any means – the Gori had its own very special characteristics. Humped tank and Samfis forks made the Gori unmistakable.**

sophisticated suspension. A rigid frame also means a heavy one and it is the refutation of this concept which makes the Gori so interesting: this frame is very light and looks to be flimsy. It does flex, but is designed to do so, and therefore can be ultra-light without fear of breaking. A 250 Gori is about 20lb lighter than a comparable Japanese bike and even lighter than its European competition.

When I say that the frame flexes, I make this assertion from a theoretical rather than a subjective stance. The frame must flex in order to avoid breaking, since it is of such a light construction, but the rider will only be aware of a lot more 'feel' than usual. This becomes a very difficult area for any tester to assess, but many riders seem to find the Gori an easy bike on which to go fast, which is the most meaningful vindication of any design.

For the best results the Gori must be ridden in a seated position and is extremely sensitive to the placement of the rider's body weight. With high



footrests and low saddle height it is a fairly long push to go from seated to standing, and riders who habitually stand up, motocross style, would find the Gori hard work.

This brings me to the key problem with the Gori: it is a very easy bike on which to go fast, perhaps too fast for many riders.

I have crashed the Gori on several occasions simply by misjudging the situation and riding above my own limits, almost without knowing it. The motor zips along and the chassis gives such stability that suddenly one realizes that this is really not the speed at which one should be riding.

Everything about the Gori begs the rider to go faster. I can hardly laud the motor or chassis any more, but everything else is equally good. The front forks are by Samfis, a company formed from the remnants of the old Ceriani concern, and they give excellent action throughout their 11.2in of air-assisted travel. The fork seals on my bike were less than adequate, but apparently this was an isolated incident.

At the rear a pair of Bitubo dampers look after the conventional swinging arm. These dampers are as good as anything I have ever used and are particularly good for enduros, since they are very responsive and sensitive in the first part of the movement, an essential trait if traction is to be found at low speeds.

Brakes are by Grimeca, and a superb pair of anchors they are too. Either wheel can be locked merely by resting on the brake pedal, and the bike can be slowed down from suicidal speeds with no effort at all. However, like the rest of the bike, the brakes will punish the unwary. Clumsy use of either will have you off in the merest wink of an eye.

Every part of the Gori is well made and well finished. In the eight months I lived with the bike the enamel was still on much of the frame and

nothing had bent or dropped off. Allen screws abound throughout and there is an air of quality about the whole bike, with a functional centre stand and q.d. rear wheel.

The two exceptions to this rule are the rear chain adjusters, which are some of the most awkward to use that I have ever come across, and the silencer, which doesn't. Can-Am get this Rotax motor whisper quiet and Gori ought to follow the same path.

I really enjoyed my season on the Gori. Although I did not race it a lot, I got into the medals on every outing but one, when I crashed. The bike is good enough to win any event in Britain with the right rider aboard and is extremely good value when compared to the opposition. However, it does need some thought and practice to get the best from it and it is definitely NOT a toy or a super sports trail bike.

I feel sure that we are going to see a lot more of the Gori in the future.

#### **Moto-Gori TR250/81**

Engine: SWM/Rotax single-cylinder two-stroke with disc-valve induction

Capacity: 248.23cc (72 × 61mm)

Compression ratio: 14:1 (geometric)

Claimed power: 38bhp at 8500rpm

Carburation: 32mm Dell'Orto with enrichening lever for cold starting.

Foam filter

Transmission: Five-speed with ratios to rider's choice. Primary kickstarting with wet plate clutch

Ignition: Motoplant CDI with 55W generator. 6V DC lighting system

Fuel capacity: 12.7 litres (2.8 imp gal)

Frame: Single spine with duplex engine cradle and twin damper swinging arm

Tyres: 3.00 × 21in front; 4.50 × 18in rear. Metzeler motocross/enduro

Suspension: Samfis front forks giving 12.4in of travel. Rear, Bitubo dampers with external reservoir giving 11.8in of movement

Brakes: Front, sls Grimeca 5½in; Rear, fully floating sls Grimeca, 5½in

Wheelbase: 59.2in

Saddle height: 36.4in

Ground clearance: 14in

Dry weight: 224lb