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FAMOUS**

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and Kawasaki 80's



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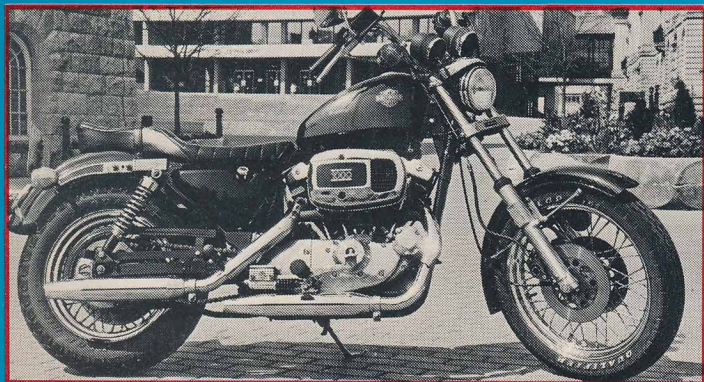
**Biking's heavy
metal hero**

Shocks unlimited **Women's wear** Z 750 GP on test

WIN +++ WIN +++ WIN



Our hot MB50 — see page 34



What made Milwaukee famous... Colin Taylor passes on his thoughts on the Harley Sportster — See page 24.

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May 12th-May 25th, 1982

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ALTERED IMAGES

John Robinson tests the Kawasaki Z 750 GP and finds it has a whole list of alterations, some cosmetic, some practical.



New Japanese Dunlop tyres add to the Kawasaki's precise handling.



Wider sections are used on the GP model and both tyres are tubeless.

KAWASAKI built their present reputation on performance, as they are quite fond of reminding us. They're not so keen to mention the fact that their early bikes had little else. And it wasn't until last year that they produced big bikes which we could actually praise for all-round comfort and thoughtful detail design.

The 750 GP takes this development one stage further, and to hammer Kawasaki's image home, it is given the highly successful sporty GP styling used on last year's 550 and 1100.

The 1980 750E was good but ordinary and had plenty of room for small improvements.

Several small changes made the 1981 750L a much nicer machine — mainly in terms of long-distance comfort. Now the sportster GP — known to Kawasaki as the Z750 R1 — has a whole list of alterations, some cosmetic, some practical.

The overall result is to improve the handling and ride and generally make the performance much more usable. The tyres possibly make the biggest difference, using new Japanese Dunlop tubeless which are wider in section than last year's. Ground clearance has been increased by 10mm and, in case that made the bike a bit twitchy, they have lengthened the wheelbase by 40mm.

This gives steering which is as fast and positive as before, complete stability and the sort of cornering properties that tempt you into going around roundabouts twice.

Ride comfort is helped by the restyled seat, which is slightly lower than before, plus the good positioning of footrests and the slim handlebars which are now in forged alloy. The small screen is mainly cosmetic but is still large enough to throw most of the airstream beyond the rider and takes much of the strain out of fast riding.

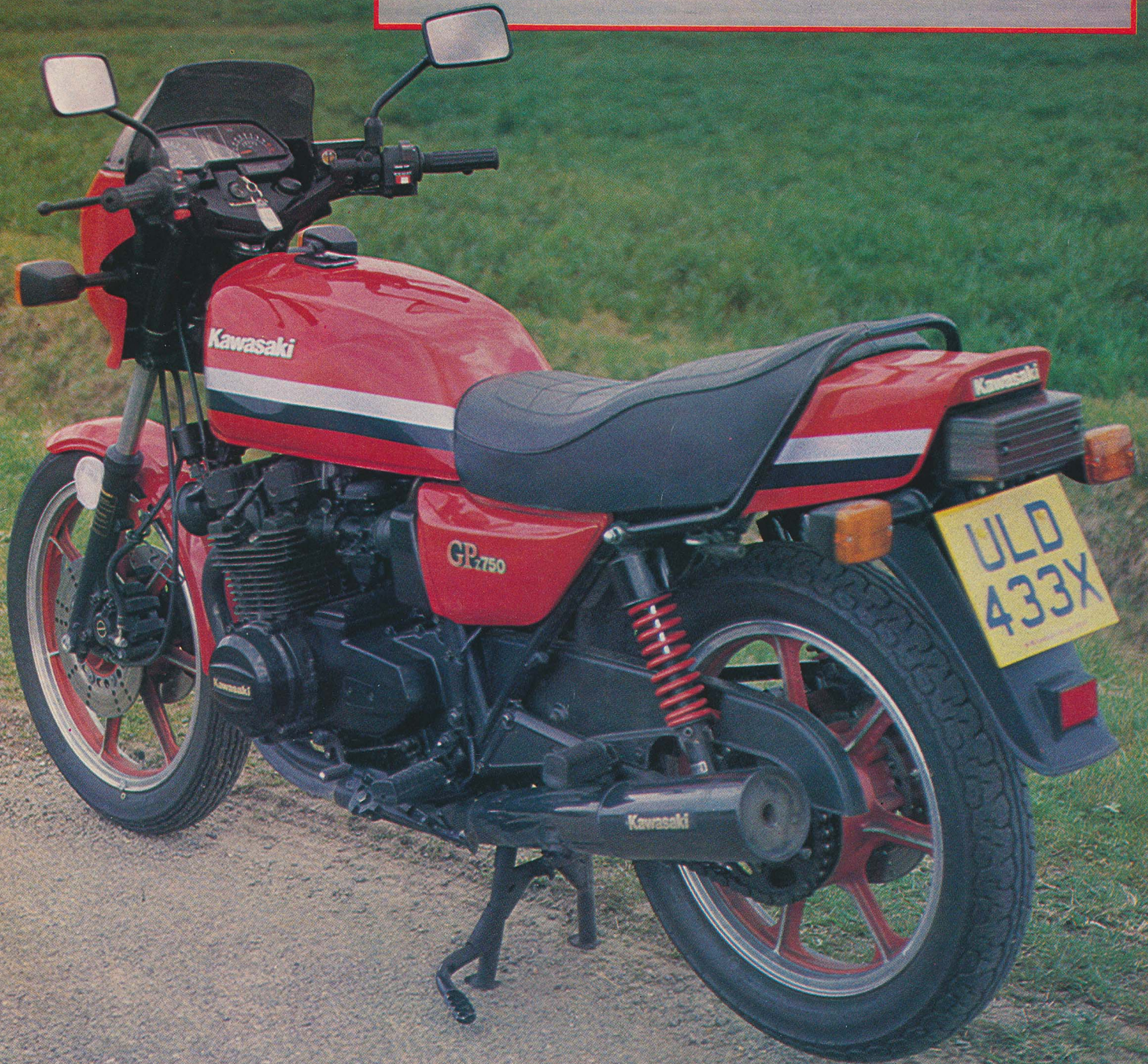
Air forks are still fitted to the 750 but now have the improvement of an inter-connection with just one valve to set the pressure inside both fork legs. This makes adjustment much easier. The back springs are conventional coil and damper units with seven pre-load positions and five settings to alter the rebound damping.

Comfort is as good, if not better than the 750L and the GP is well up to day-long touring, whether it involves long, fast motorway stretches or the naggy curves of country lanes. It is helped by the completely smooth engine: Kawasakis normally run pretty evenly anyway, and all trace of tingling vibration is eliminated by using rubber front engine mounts.

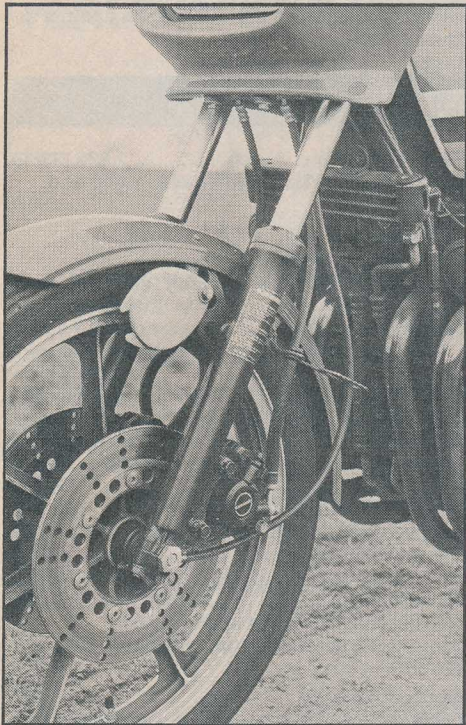
Vibration can be tiring and annoying on long runs and it is very difficult to get rid of it altogether. Four cylinder engines balance out the large, primary forces caused by the pistons but are left with a high frequency tingle caused by not being able to run all the pistons along the same axis. It is this vibration which Kawasaki seemed to have soaked up quite successfully.

There is another form of vibration caused by engine roughness, lumpy or uneven combustion. This is one area in which Kawasakis have always been good. All of their engines run very smoothly and consistently and this characteristic, combined with the new engine mounts, give one of the smoothest motors I have ever used. The only things which let you know the engine is still spinning are the rev counter and the urgent strain in the arms whenever the throttle is opened.

Kawasaki are claiming around six more horsepower from this oversquare engine, although this wasn't borne out in our performance tests. The day we ran the bike at MIRA was fine and was one of those rare occasions when there was no wind at all. In these completely neutral conditions the 750 ran just over 129mph, which is some 4mph



ALTERED IMAGES



Air forks now have an interconnecting pipe and single valve for easier adjustment.

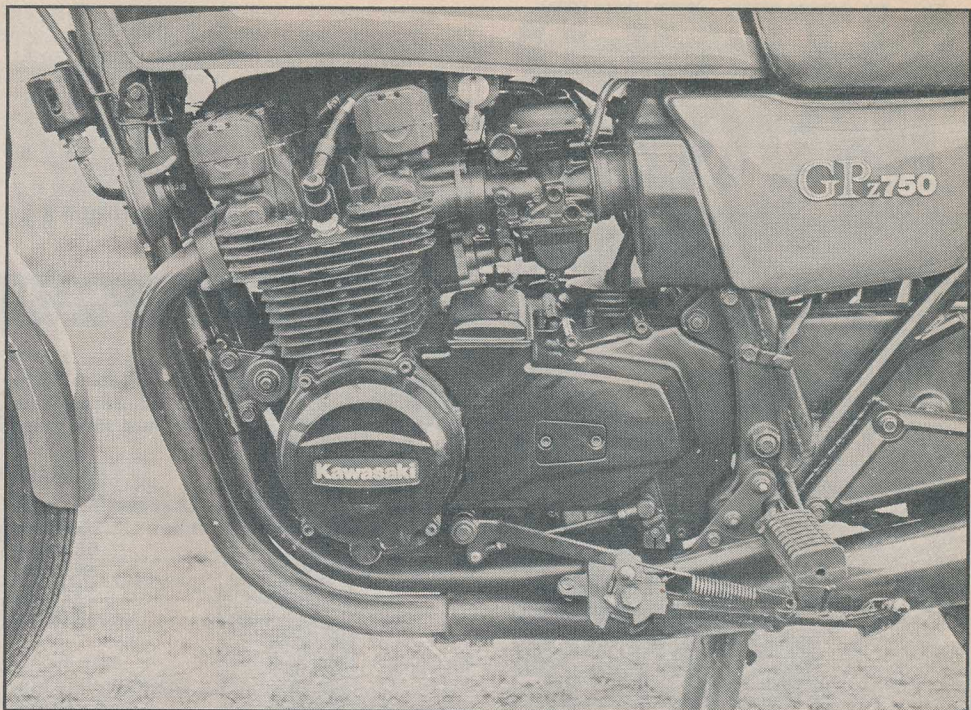
more than the 750L managed. This is more likely to be caused by the small screen and the slightly lower riding position (the gearing on the two models is the same). The standing start quarter mile times were near enough identical, at a respectable 12.26 seconds taking the bike to a terminal speed of 107mph. This, and the roll-on acceleration test which was slightly slower than last year's bike, suggest that there is not much difference in the power output between the two machines.

Fuel consumption was also similar to the earlier machine. The GP got through more fuel when all the figures were averaged out but I suspect that this was because the bike's handling encouraged more use of the gears and engine performance.

Deliberate attempts to get good economy gave us nearly 65mph compared to normal riding in the high 40s. More importantly, the 750 keeps the big, 4.8 gallon tank which even with fairly brisk riding, still gives a range of nearly 200 miles.

The brakes are the same as before — although there's no real reason to want to change the compact calipers with their elliptical, sintered metal pads or the stainless steel discs which have irregularly-spaced holes to prevent pad squeal. They give enough power to suit most circumstances — and more power would probably be an embarrassment on many occasions — backed up by a fine degree of feel which keeps the brakes safely usable even on slippery surfaces.

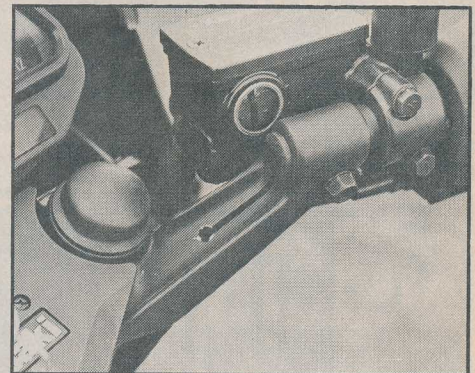
One change for this year is the dog-leg handlebar levers bordering the new instrument layout. This has a tachometer which converts to a voltmeter when a button is pressed, a liquid crystal fuel gauge and a warning light which flashes if there is a malfunction. Switching on the ignition makes



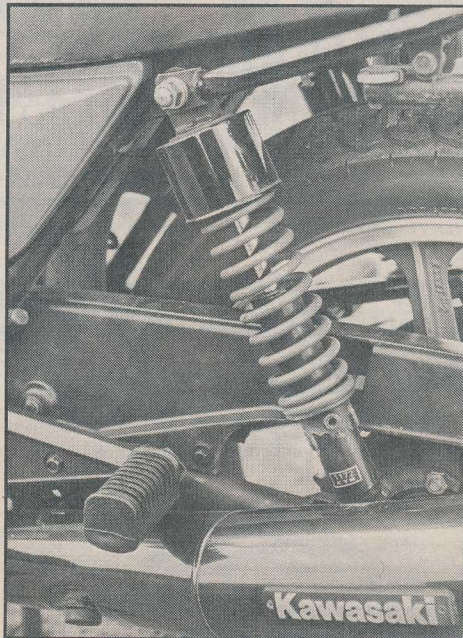
More power is claimed for the new 750. Our tests did not confirm this although it is still pretty rapid and is one of the smoothest-running machines we've ever tested.



Instruments now include a voltmeter and LCD fuel gauge along with safety checks and tell-tale warning lights.



Forged aluminium handlebars help leave the instrument area uncluttered and blend in with the black chrome trim.

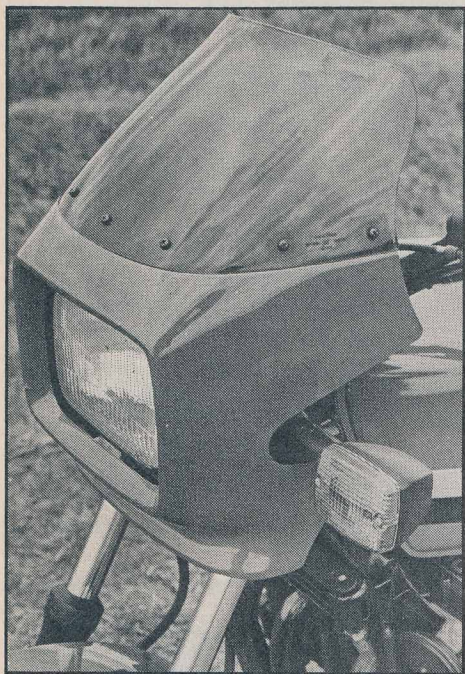


Rear units are adjustable for spring pre-load and damping to cope with varying load/speed conditions.



The high technology sidestand, along with its various cut-out switches, overrides and warning systems . . .

ALTERED IMAGES



The quarter-fairing brings the 750 into the GP-styling bracket and also seems to help performance slightly.

the system run through all its checks to show that the sensors and warning lights are working. The items it monitors are side stand, oil level, battery fluid level, and fuel level. In addition there is Kawasaki's cut-out switch on the side stand which kills the ignition if the bike's weight is taken off the stand while the stand is still extended. It all seems a bit too complicated, especially when an ordinary clock and perhaps a permanent voltmeter would be a lot more welcome.

Other changes compared to last year's 750 are: quarter fairing with rectangular halogen headlamp; all-black engine and carbs, black chrome on exhausts, grab rail, filler cap, etc; oil cooler; twin horns; "black" tail light lens; rectangular mirrors; Mikuni instead of Keihin carbs.

The sum total is hard to criticise; it is a racy improvement on last year's bike and one which is easily able to hold its own against the competition.

SPECIFICATION

Recommended retail price£2079
 Warranty 12 months, unlimited mileage
 Availability Immediate
 Service intervals 500 and 3000 miles

PERFORMANCE

Top speed 129.1mph
 Standing start 1/4-mile 12.26sec/107.4mph
 30mph top gear roll-on, 1/4-mile 14.63sec/
 90.6mph
 Fuel consumption: best 64.7mpg
 worst 33.8mpg
 average 46.0mpg

ENGINE

Type DOHC, in-line four
 Bore and stroke 66 x 54mm
 Piston displacement 738cc
 Compression ratio 9.5
 Fuel system four Mikuni BS34

TRANSMISSION

Gears five-speed
 Clutch wet, multiplate
 Primary drive HyVo chain, jackshaft,
 gear drive to clutch
 Final drive 630 chain
 Primary reduction 2.55

Final reduction 2.538 (33/13)
 Gear ratios: 2.333; 1.631; 1.272; 1.040 and
 0.875

CHASSIS

Type tubular, double cradle.
 Front suspension air-assisted telescopic forks
 with interconnection
 Rear suspension swing arm with 7 spring
 preload positions and 5-position damping
 adjustment
 Front tyre 100/90V — 19 tubeless
 Rear tyre 120/90V — 18 tubeless
 Front brake twin hydraulic discs
 Rear brake single hydraulic disc
 Wheelbase 57.5 inch
 Length 87.2 inch
 Seat height 31.5 inch
 Dry weight 478lb
 Fuel capacity 21.7 litre (4.8 gal)
 Oil capacity 3.5 litre (6.2 pint)
 Instruments: includes speedo, tach,
 odometer, resettable trip, voltmeter, fuel
 gauge.

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