

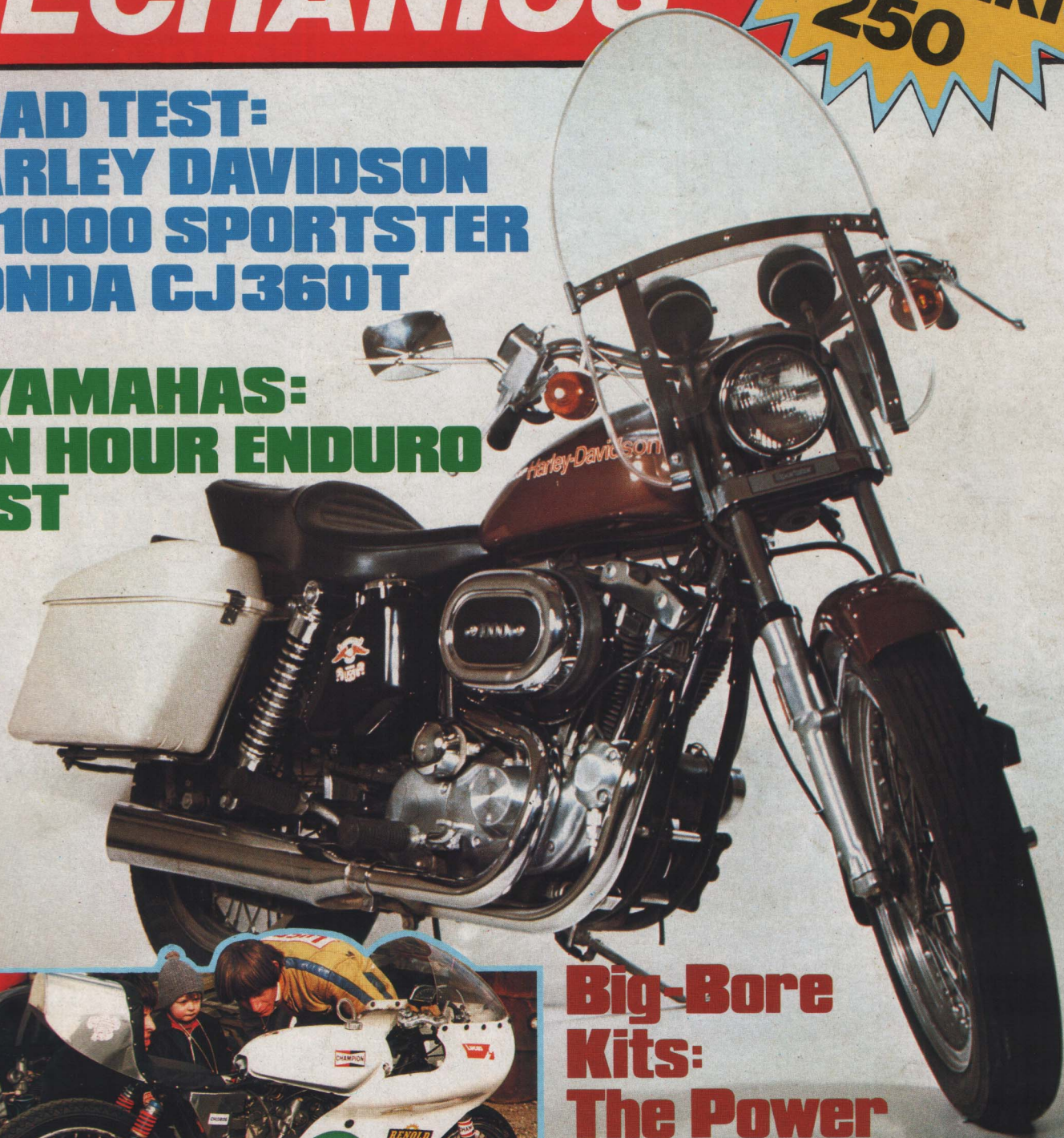
MOTOR CYCLE MECHANICS

JUNE 1977 40p

Win
a Suzuki
250

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HARLEY DAVIDSON
XL1000 SPORTSTER
HONDA CJ360T**

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TEN HOUR ENDURO
TEST**



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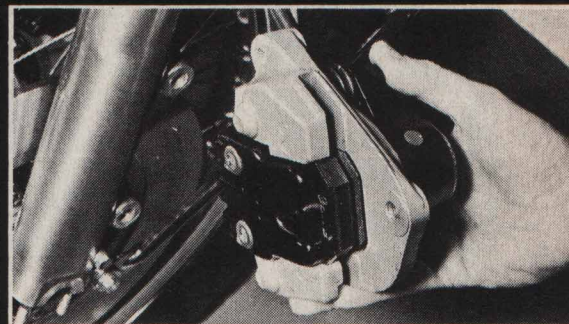
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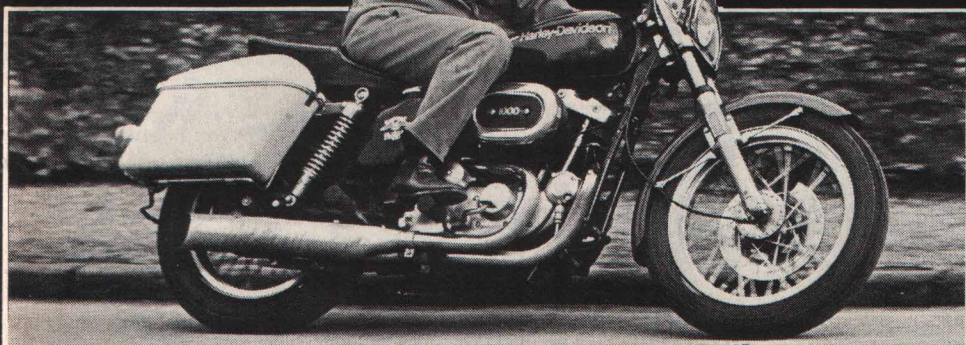
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**ABC CERTIFIED SALE
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111,692**



WIN A 250 SUZUKI

**DETAILS
PAGE 47**

Harley-Davidson XLT 1000

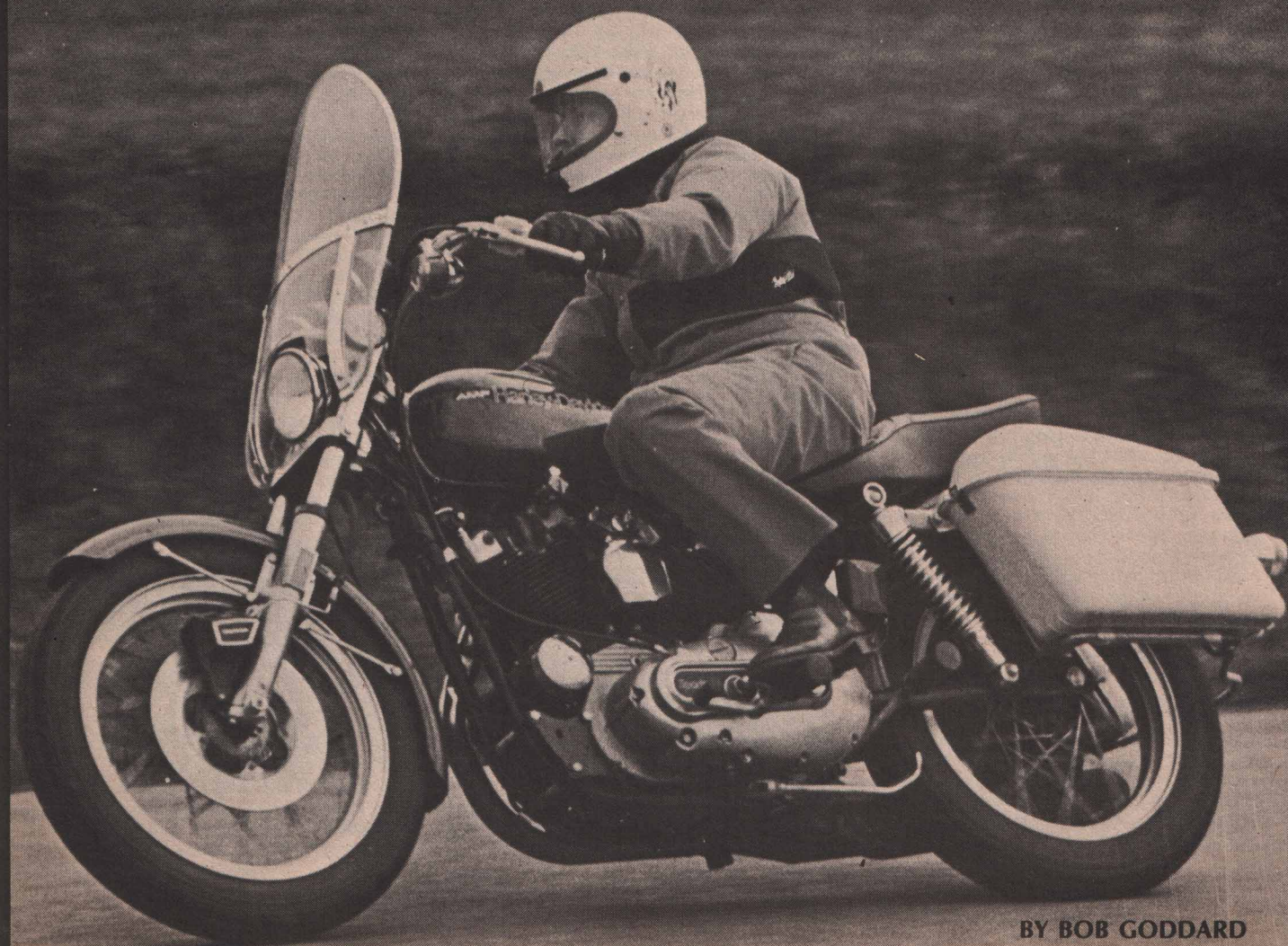


Ever since Arthur Davidson and Bill Harley built their first motorised bicycle in 1903, the name Harley-Davidson has been respected throughout the world as synonymous with quality. The traditional big-inch V-twin formula has continued largely unaltered in the face of radically changing fashions and market demands in motorcycling. Despite a clutch of little two-stroke singles, offspring of H-Ds marriage to the Italian Aermacchi concern, the latest range of big Harleys owe much of their design to their earliest side-valve ancestors. This system of in-breeding in motorcycle design has proved very successful for BMW with their flat-twin lay out, so does it work for Harley-D?

Judging by people's reactions towards the rumbling monster that I rode, you either love Harley-Davidsons, or hate 'em. It is not

the kind of machine that you can be indifferent about, and the turned heads of pedestrians, and the small crowds of schoolchildren and grannies that collected round the bike when parked, suggest that it cannot be easily ignored either.

The XLT1000 model we tested is the touring version of the XLH1000 Sportster — petrol tank, panniers, seat and windshield being the only differences, so when our test bike conked out in Germany before we had a chance to complete our test programme, we substituted it with a Sportster. Therefore, while the test relates directly to the XLT, the track testing figures were obtained with the Sportster which has a definite advantage on top speed, and a slight advantage on acceleration and braking over its encumbered brother. Because of a shortage of time we are not able to give our usual



BY BOB GODDARD

Harley-Davidson XLT 1000



engine performance figures and graphs.

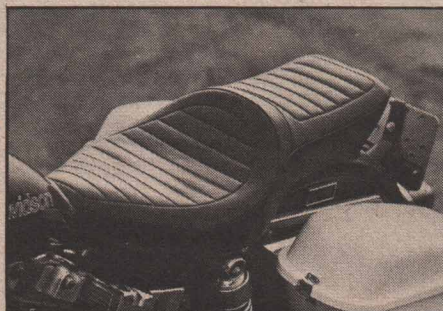
I must admit I was apprehensive when I arrived at Harley-Davidson's UK headquarters just off Piccadilly Circus, and looked over the hefty chunk of American metalwork that was lounging on its side-stand in the corner of the underground carpark. The handlebars looked like something from Brooklands, and the prospect of using them to pilot one litre of motorcycle between the flotillas of London taxis didn't inspire me with confidence.

Still, the seat felt nicely low — I would be able to leg my way out of most tight spots I thought — and the presence of an electric starter to crank over the two 500cc pistons would save me from the ultimate embarrassment of stalling in the middle of Piccadilly and being unable to turn the motor over with my puny leg muscles.

After a pep-talk from the Harley men they retreated to a safe distance, and I hauled the bike up off its sidestand (no centre-stand is fitted), thumbed the starter button and headed out into the Central London dodgem race with the thunder of the Harley still reverberating around the confines of the AMF garage. Once rolling, the steering became surprisingly light and the wheelbarrow handlebars were quickly forgotten as I got on with challenging the traffic and blipping the throttle manfully for the Saville Row windowgazers who turned to stare.

Provided you didn't forget about the width of the bike with its custom-made panniers, the Harley-D could be weaved through the traffic with ease. The front brake lever needed quite a stretch of the mit to reach, which made operation slightly tiresome, but the 11.5inch disc made short work of halting the 580lbs of motorcycle. Clutch action was very heavy too, which had my left wrist aching painfully by the time I cleared the city and could use top (4th) as overdrive on the A1 — but perhaps like everything else American, their motorcyclists have bigger and stronger hands. Certainly the handlebar grips were of considerably larger diameter than most bikes, which made it difficult to maintain a tight grasp.

But the riding position was strangely comfortable, the armchair seat very relaxing and the tall screen effectively cut the fatiguing influence of the wind. With the motor lazily rumbling away below at 3,000rpm the big Harley was cruising at around 70mph, and felt like 40mph. It was so stable at this speed that it was quite safe to take both hands off the bars, and even gusty sidewinds didn't deflect the bike much, despite the windage of sidepanniers and screen. That screen was a bit of a nuisance when it rained though, because with both helmet visor and screen covered in water droplets it became very difficult to see through, and even when it was clean and dry the screen caused a certain amount of optical distortion which was disconcerting when trying to judge the distance and speed of an oncoming car when overtaking another. For anyone contemplating long distance touring — which is what the XLT is designed for after all — the comfort that the screen affords will almost certainly outweigh the inconvenience of not being able to see where you are going. There was a little vibration, but it was low frequency and caused no discomfort, and so after droning up the dual carriageway for fifty miles I decided that this was an extremely comfortable and relaxing motorcycle to ride. Then I turned off onto the bumpy, twisting country roads that are the last



The huge expanse of the driver's seat gave armchair luxury on long journeys and was pleasantly low.

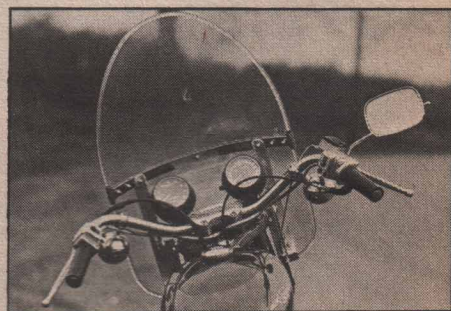
twenty miles home, and got an unpleasant surprise.

The sedate canter became a rodeo, as the XLT bucked and kicked from bump to bump, and wallowed alarmingly on fast bumpy corners while I used the tiller handlebars to point the front wheel in the direction I wanted to go, and prayed that the back end would follow.

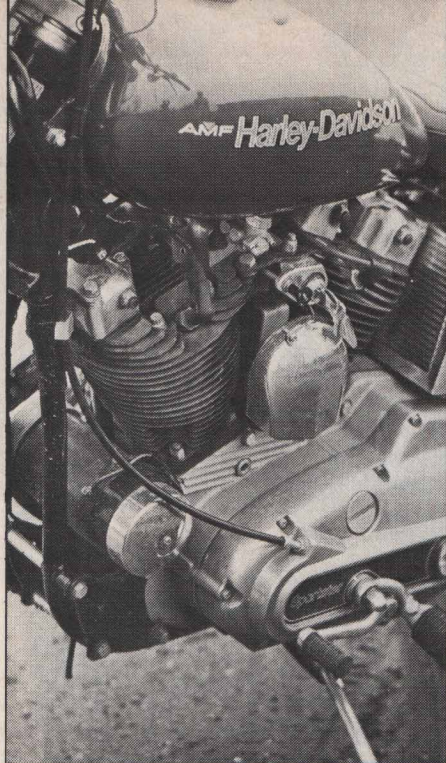
On some of the rougher patches frightening gaunching noises came from the back end as the rear suspension bottomed out and allowed the tyre to hit the mudguard, and the springs were kicking back hard enough to shoot me out of the bucket seat as the bike lurched along. It was obvious that there was virtually nil damping in the rear units, and I couldn't even raise the spring pre-loads on the three-position shocks because Harley-Davidson don't supply tool kits with their machines — not even a plug spanner. If, as the UK Harley-Davidson men suggested, this is because "they never breakdown" then the Milwaukee bosses are suffering from delusion. But if, as is much more likely, the toolkit is omitted to keep prices down, then the prospective Harley-Davidson owner must add the cost of providing himself with a toolkit to the £2,236.50 that the bike already rings up.

I later learned that a consignment of Harleys to the UK were all suffering from a duff batch of dampers, and the XLT was one of them, so the handling might normally be considerably better than the one tested. On smooth surfaces the bike could be heeled well over into bends and powered out really rapidly because the motor would pull from such low rpm. Torque is what the big V-twin is all about, and being restricted to 3,500-4,000rpm maximum because the engine was new and tight didn't detract from the hefty kick in the pants I got every time the throttle was snapped open. An accelerator pump fitted to the single carburettor hidden behind the huge chrome-rimmed aircleaner on the right hand side of the cylinders, helped to promote this arm-jerking phenomenon, which was particularly exhilarating when stomping the gearbox in top after getting the engine wound up in third. With this kind of power spread, 1,000-6,000rpm, the four widely spaced ratios are quite sufficient.

The power is converted into progress through a fat 4.25 x 18 Yokohama rear tyre, with a 3.75 x 19inch version on the front, and they seemed to give quite adequate grip in wet and dry conditions, but did peculiar things on tarmac seams and road markings. The bike gave a slight twitch as it was



The wheelbarrow handlebars were quite comfortable but grips and levers would better suit Muhammad Ali.



Torque of the Devil. There is something sinister about the growl of the exhaust and the tremendous low-rev urge of the V-twin.

crossing any seam in the road, and taking the bike across white lines in the wet made the whole plot weave violently, but it was more unnerving than dangerous.

The Sportster is fitted with a three gallon petrol tank on the touring model, but the saving grace of Harley's miserly fuel capacity is the equally miserly fuel consumption.

At running-in speeds the XLT was doing over 70mpg, and as the motor loosened up and was used more and more the consumption dropped to a lowest figure of 56mpg, averaging out at a little over 60mpg, which for a 1,000cc engine is very good. The low rev — high torque motor is largely responsible for this economy, but a factor must be the carburation which is set up very lean on Harleys to help them through the stringent USA emission regulations. This leanness could be felt in the bike's reluctance to cruise smoothly on a small throttle, and the motor coughed and stumbled if the twistgrip was gently eased back as if there was a misfire.

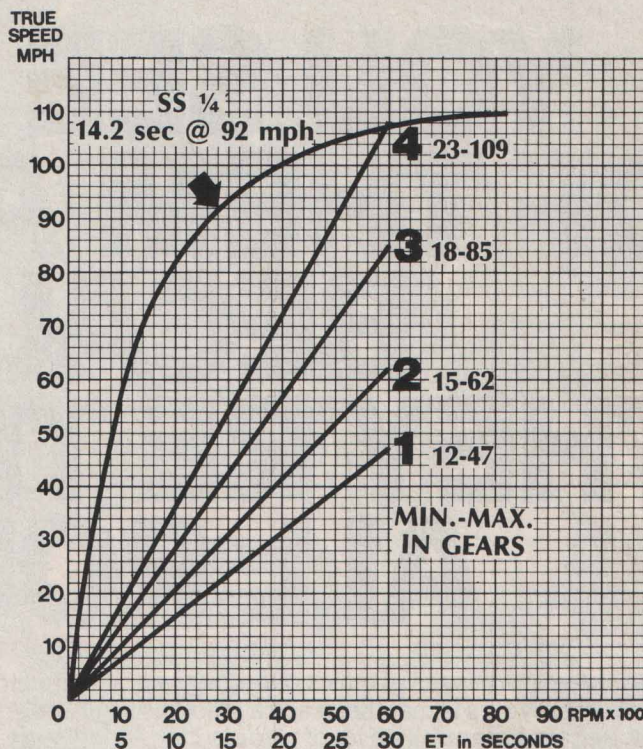
Designed especially for the Sportster, the panniers were very good. They were sturdily mounted, had a simple locking catch and hinge which allowed the lids to be completely removed, could be detached from the bike in seconds, and held a surprisingly large amount of luggage.

Electrical equipment on the Harley was high quality and efficient, with the compact headlamp throwing out sufficient light for legal-speed cruising on unlit roads. On each of the chunky handlebar consoles there was a winker button which had to be held down with the thumb to operate the indicator. The horn sounded as if it had been designed for fog-bound shipping but the volume was enough to make errant pedestrians jump. Overall standard of finish on the bike was very high.

In terms of performance alone the XLT could never be worth two and a quarter thousand pounds, and yet this living legend has an indefinable magic that no other bike possesses.

JUNE 1977

Performance & Specification



TRACK CONDITIONS: Dry and still, ambient temp. 54 deg. F.

PERFORMANCE

maximum speed 109.5mph
SS 1/4-mile 14.2sec at 92 mph
braking from 30 mph 22 feet
fuel consumption: best 72 mpg
worst 56mpg
average over test 62 mpg
power to weight ratio (claimed)
0.11296 bhp/lb

ENGINE: overhead valve, 45 degree air-cooled V-twin four-stroke, with dry sump lubrication. Single 38mm Keihin carburettor, single cb and coil ignition, 12V 146W generator feeding 32 amp/hr battery. Electric starter.

displacement 997.5cc
bore x stroke 81 x 96.8mm
compression ratio 9:1
claimed output 61 bhp at 6200 rpm

TRANSMISSION: triple chain primary drive to multi-plate wet clutch, four speed gearbox and final drive by chain.
primary reduction 1.735
final reduction 2.4286
gearbox ratios: 10.63; 7.70; 5.82; and 4.22.

CHASSIS: single hydraulic disc front brake 11.5 inch diam, drum rear brake 8 inch diam, three pre-load rear dampers.
front tyre 3.75 x 19 Yokohama
rear tyre 4.25 x 18 Yokohama
castor 61 deg
trail 4.53 ins

wheelbase 58.5 ins
overall length 87.3 ins
dry weight 540 lbs
test weight 578 lbs
fuel tank capacity 3 gal
oil tank capacity 5.8 pts

PARTS PRICES (inc.) VAT

front mudguard £37.29
handlebar £14.03
speedo cable £4.80
cb points £1.89
exhaust system (complete) £86.29
list price £2236.50
warranty: six months or 6,000 miles Parts and Labour

Manufacturer: AMF International Ltd, Harley-Davidson Motor Co. Inc., 3700 West Juneau Ave., P.O. Box 653, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201, U.S.A.
Importer: Harley-Davidson, AMF Int. Ltd., 25-28 Old Burlington St., London W.1.

How it compares

Model	Price inc. VAT	Max. spd	Av. mpg	SS 1/4	Dry wt.
Harley-Davidson	2177	109	62	14.2	540
Moto-Guzzi 850 T3	1699	109	54	15.1	495
Ducati 860 GTS	1599	109	43	13.1	506
Honda Gold Wing	1600	122	45	14.0	584
BMW R100RS	2999	116	47	13.5	464
Kawasaki Z900	1400	135	48	12.3	506
Benelli 750-six	1799	109	37	14.0	485