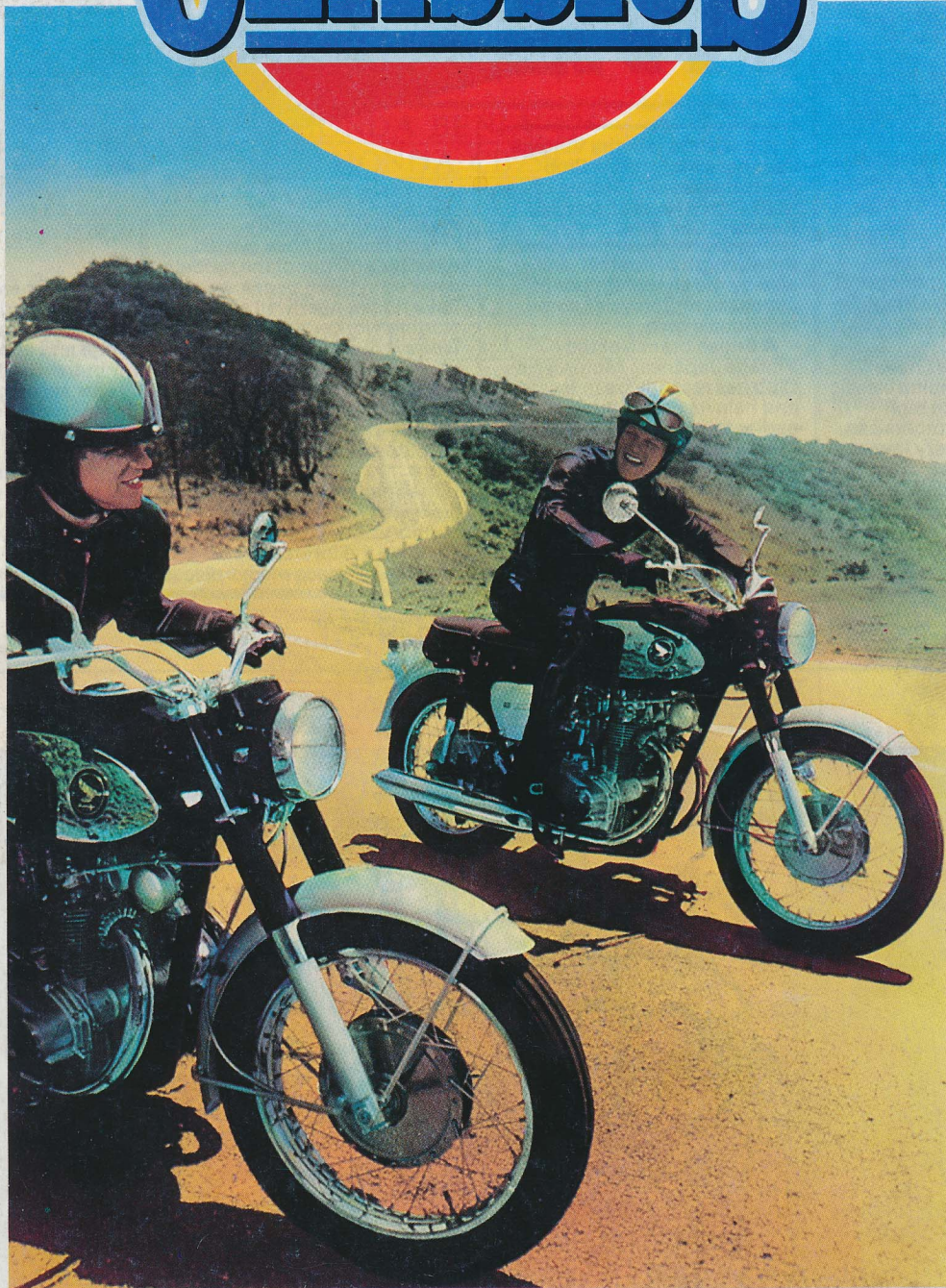


JAPANESE CLASSICS



20 Golden Greats
from the Land of
the Rising Sun
1960-'72

JAPANESE CLASSICS

CONTENTS

Editor:
Brian Crichton.

Designed by:
Creative Publishing Services,
Peterborough 253203.

Publisher:
Bob Berry.

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| HONDA BENLY 125 ... | 4 |
| HONDA CB750 ... | 9 |
| KAWASAKI SAMURAI 250 ... | 12 |
| KAWASAKI H1 500 ... | 16 |
| HONDA CB450 ... | 21 |
| SUZUKI STINGER 125 ... | 25 |
| YAMAHA XS-1 650 ... | 27 |
| SUZUKI GT750 ... | 30 |
| HONDA CB72 250 ... | 34 |
| YAMAHA YR350 ... | 38 |
| KAWASAKI Z1 900 ... | 41 |
| SUZUKI SUPER SIX 250 ... | 44 |
| HONDA CB500 ... | 48 |
| SUZUKI GT380 ... | 51 |
| YAMAHA TX500 ... | 53 |
| HONDA SUPER CUB 50 ... | 55 |
| SUZUKI COBRA 500 ... | 58 |
| HONDA XL250 ... | 61 |
| BRIDGESTONE GTR350 ... | 66 |
| YAMAHA YDS250 ... | 69 |

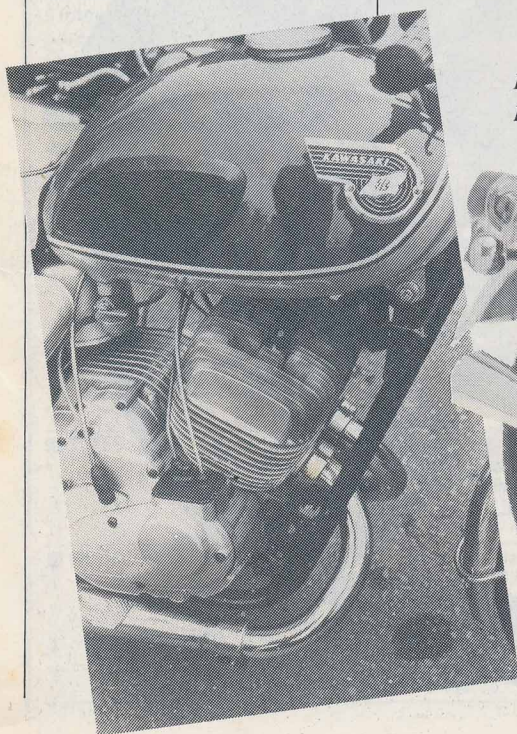
Japanese Classics is a Motor Cycle News magazine published by EMAP National Publications, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough PE2 0UW. Telephone 0733/237111.

Typesetting, colour and mono origination by East Midland Litho Printers, Woodston, Peterborough.

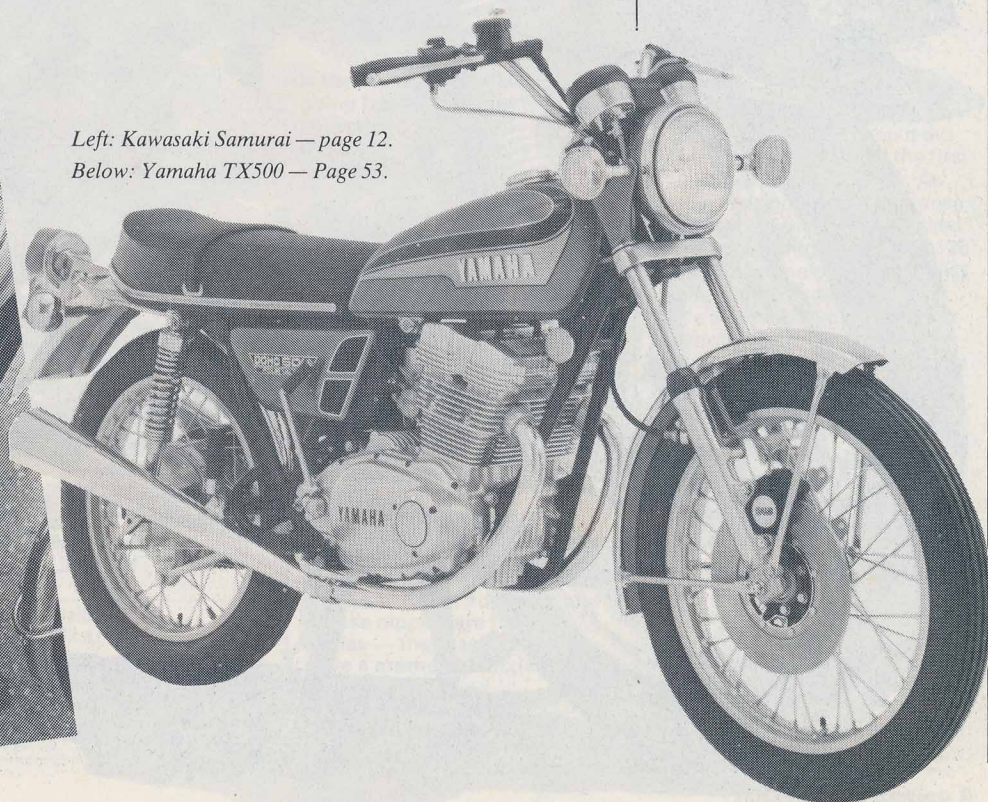
Printed by Alabaster Passmore and Sons, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent.

Copyright, EMAP National Publications.

emap.
NATIONAL PUBLICATIONS LTD



*Left: Kawasaki Samurai — page 12.
Below: Yamaha TX500 — Page 53.*



SUZUKI GT380

ENTER RAM AIR

*It is far too easy to run off reams
of superlatives in describing the
pleasure of riding the 380. It is
flexible yet sporty and steers like
the metaphorical train*

Jerry Clayton, MCN tester

APART from the pleasure and pride of ownership in refurbishing and riding older Japanese motor cycles there is another bonus to consider.

That bonus is financial. Just as the passing of time has matured the machines featured in this publication into objects worthy of appreciation, the passing of more time will surely see a substantial increase in the value of concours original Japanese Classics.

This has already happened to a fair degree. But there are still thousands of bargains to be taken advantage of. At present secondhand Japanese motor cycles in general are commanding very poor prices. It's a boom time for collectors of Classic Japanese hardware.

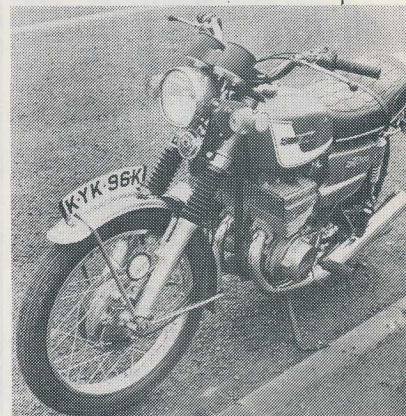
Many of the restored machines featured in this magazine were obtained at bargain prices. Though it is becoming more and more difficult to come across machines such as the 125 Honda Benly and 350GTR Bridgestone at snip prices, the budget collector still has a vast choice.

The GT380 falls into this budget category. As usual the drum-braked model first sold in Britain in 1972 is the most collectable.

It was the first air cooled triple from Suzuki and it's possible to track down examples in running condition for as little as £200 or less.

Suzuki's 500cc Cobra two-stroke twin of 1968, though not an outstanding success had laid a fresh path for big two-strokes.

Kawasaki blasted along that path with their Mach III 500 triple two-stroke. The slipstreams created by both

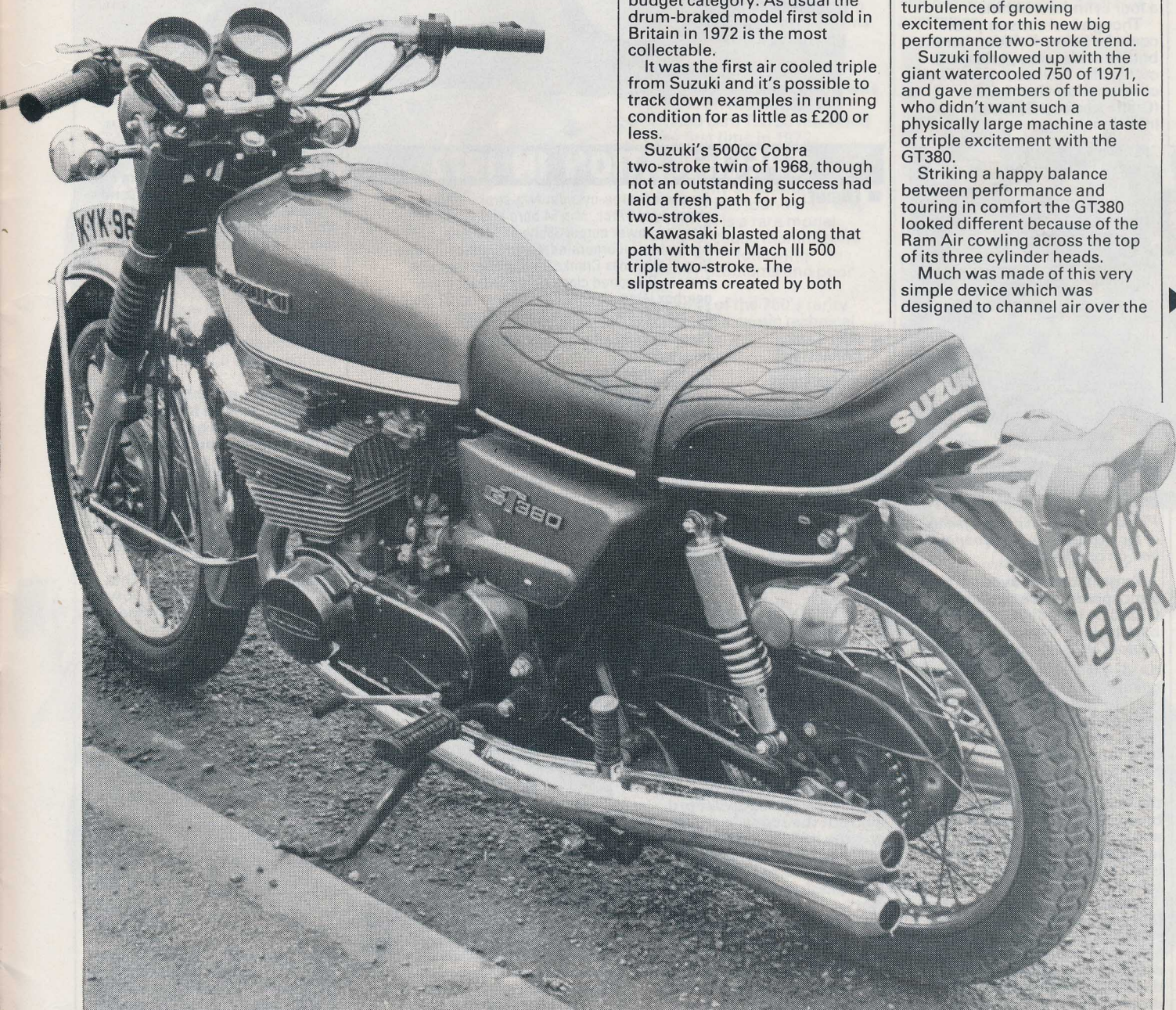


machines carried along the turbulence of growing excitement for this new big performance two-stroke trend.

Suzuki followed up with the giant watercooled 750 of 1971, and gave members of the public who didn't want such a physically large machine a taste of triple excitement with the GT380.

Striking a happy balance between performance and touring in comfort the GT380 looked different because of the Ram Air cowl over the top of its three cylinder heads.

Much was made of this very simple device which was designed to channel air over the



SUZUKI GT380

ENTER RAM AIR

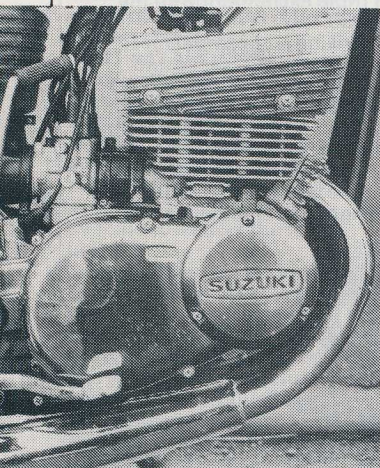
heads to keep them cool. Some argue that it worked better as a sales ploy than a practical proposition.

Whatever, the 380 with separate barrels and heads proved to be popular because of its competitive price and ease of handling.

It was followed up later in the year by a similarly styled 550 version with chrome bores. The 380 — actually 371cc — was conventional with steel liners which could be rebored. Many chose the 380 in preference because of that fact.

Both machines had six speed gearboxes and centre exhaust system split into two giving the flamboyant symmetrical look of a four cylinder machine.

Though fuel consumption could be heavy if ridden hard both models were praised by owners for their economy of oil consumption via the CCI (Crankcase and Cylinder Injection) system.



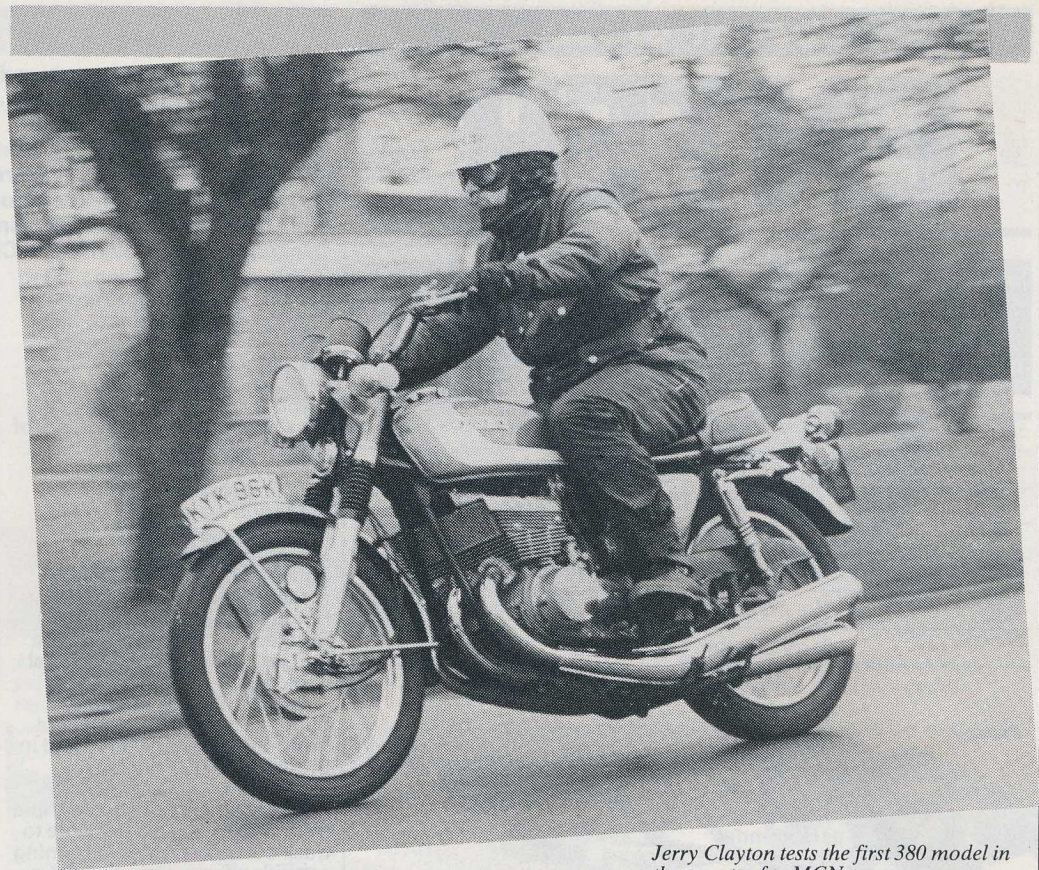
Primary kickstarting was a feature of the engine. Ram Air scoop was a bolt-on component.

To get a better flavour of the atmosphere at the time of the GT380J's introduction let's look back to Jerry Clayton's test in *Motor Cycle News* April 1972.

HAVE YOU ever had such a beautiful bike that you kept making furtive little trips into your garage just to admire it? I have, or rather I did have. The bike in question was on loan from Suzuki.

Finished in Candy Turquoise, the test 380 was the first of its breed to grace these shores, and it must surely rank high on looks alone, Candy Bright Red is the alternative colour scheme.

The sound emitted from the four huge silencers is reminiscent of a grand prix four. It is a wonderful, exotic sound, that gradually diminishes to become a low droning as wind roar whips it



Jerry Clayton tests the first 380 model in the country for MCN.

SPECIFICATION IN 1972

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ■ ENGINE: | Air cooled three-cylinder two-stroke with a capacity of 371cc, 54 x 54 bore and stroke. Claimed power output 38bhp at 7,500rpm. Ram Air System incorporated. Engine lubricated by Suzuki total loss Crankcase/Cylinder Injection system. Six speed close ratio constant mesh gearbox integral. Speeds in gears: 1st, 32; 2nd, 44; 3rd, 57; 4th, 71; 5th, 87; 6th, 100mph. |
| ■ FUEL TANK CAPACITY: | Three and a quarter gallons including one gallon reserve. |
| ■ DIMENSIONS: | Overall length: 82.9ins, Width: 33.5in. Height: 43.3in. Wheelbase: 53.4in. |
| ■ BRAKES: | Front 180mm twin leading shoe, rear 180mm single leading shoe. |
| ■ PERFORMANCE: | Maximum speed: 100.00mph. Standing ¼ mile: 14.48 seconds. Fuel consumption: 38mpg (average over 500 miles). |
| ■ PRICE: | £499.50. |

away at 90mph.

And naturally, Suzuki more than cater for fast cruising by providing a faultless five plus overdrive style top gearbox.

Top speed through our Snetterton speed trap was exactly 100mph — not at all bad when you consider the capacity.

The engine spotlights a new feature — the Ram Air System on the heads. This is based on the normal air scoop/venturi idea, but the scoop is raised over the middle cylinder where a cooling air stream is most needed to increase the amount of air passing over this "hot spot".

It is far too easy to run off reams of superlatives in describing the positive pleasure of riding the 380. It is flexible, yet sporty, and steers like the metaphorical train.



Four pipes and enormous tail-light, some of the features that made the GT380J stand out.

It is in the braking department that the only serious criticism of the bike can be made. The front brake tends to fade after being applied hard and frequently. It really does seem like a case for fitting a disc.

Quite apart from this one criticism, the 380GT is a most safety conscious machine. The rear light is huge without detracting from the business-like line of the machine.

Indicators are things that we now tend to take for granted, but Suzuki have gone a stage further by incorporating reflectors in the side of the indicator moulding so that the machine can be picked up in headlight even from the side.

The biggest problem with all these latest multi-cylindered two-strokes is fuel consumption. It is a price that one pays for the smooth power delivered, and the revs used to obtain it. On the 380, the consumption, compared with others in the same capacity class, is favourable. The bike returned 38mpg, ridden hard.

The fuel tank holds three and a quarter gallons — a gallon is in reserve — which gives a theoretical range of 80-odd miles before turning the tap to "R". This mileage is not really enough.

This last point apart, the Suzuki 380GT is one of the most exciting machines to emerge from the current spate of multi-cylinder rivalry between the top Japanese manufacturers. □

SEE PAGE 65
FOR THE GT380J
IN GLORIOUS COLOUR

SUZUKI GT380



See story, page 51