

IN COLOUR LEFT: The MV Agusta Monza's classic lines will never date

and there's no need to make the tacho needle budge off its rest unless you're in a real hurry. More likely than not though you'll keep the revs up for one reason only—the noise!

Those black pipes provide some of the sweetest music ever to come from an internal combustion engine. Below 6,000rpm the pipes growl but above 6,000rpm the staccato shriek they emit is enough to send the adrenalin rushing through the veins of even the most laid-back rider.

For the sake of convenience John decided to stick with the standard MV shaft drive rather than switch to the Magni kit chain drive conversion.

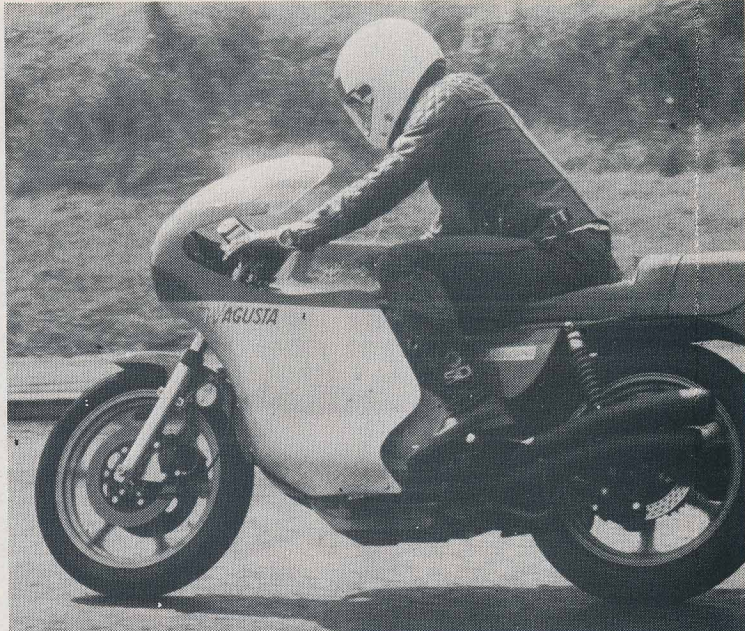
Despite the lack of a cush in the clutch or rear wheel, the transmission is remarkably smooth though this must largely be down to the immaculate engine preparation. Starting is electric only in the form of a belt-driven Bosch dyno start hidden beneath the rear of the crankcases. This piece of machinery acts both as a starter and as a dynamo and proves reliable unless it rains when belt slip can be a problem.

With a full fairing the engine runs hot and unless you keep on the move the clutch tends to drag. At low speeds handling is heavy and the machine feels cumbersome with its low bars and racy riding position. But once speed increases the MV begins to feel right and steers perfectly.

Handling seems nicely neutral, though with a nearly priceless piece of machinery beneath me I never got down to exploring the bike's limits. Rear suspension is rock hard which would undoubtedly cause problems on high speed, bumpy corners. Funnily enough the front Ceriani forks are very soft by comparison and allow a fair amount of dive when you hit the superb Brembo discs.

Phil Read reckoned towards the end of MV's road racing effort that it was bad handling that finally killed the marque on the track. Undoubtedly it was the marque's eventual failure in racing circles that also killed off the road bikes, since MV traded purely on their track reputation.

But even now, almost a decade after the factory won its last world title, there is still some strange attraction about an MV. The sound and the colour sum up all that was great about the marque's racing exploits and the fact that MV roadsters are by no means



As with any multi-thousand machine built for speed riding is a constant battle between throttle and wallet—crashing this MV could cost up to £8,500

perfect and very expensive does little to put off potential owners. John Lee charges in the region of £3,500 to restore an MV and a complete machine will cost you something like £8,500. True, you could buy a better road bike but

you could never buy a machine with quite as much heritage or breeding.

Verghera Engineering can be contacted on 0787 71140 and they're based at 86 Maldon Court, Great Cornard, Sudbury, Suffolk.

Ego stroker...

LIKE the legend of King Arthur the aura surrounding Kawasaki's three-cylinder 750 Mach IV is a mixture of documented fact, myth, imagination and wishful thinking.

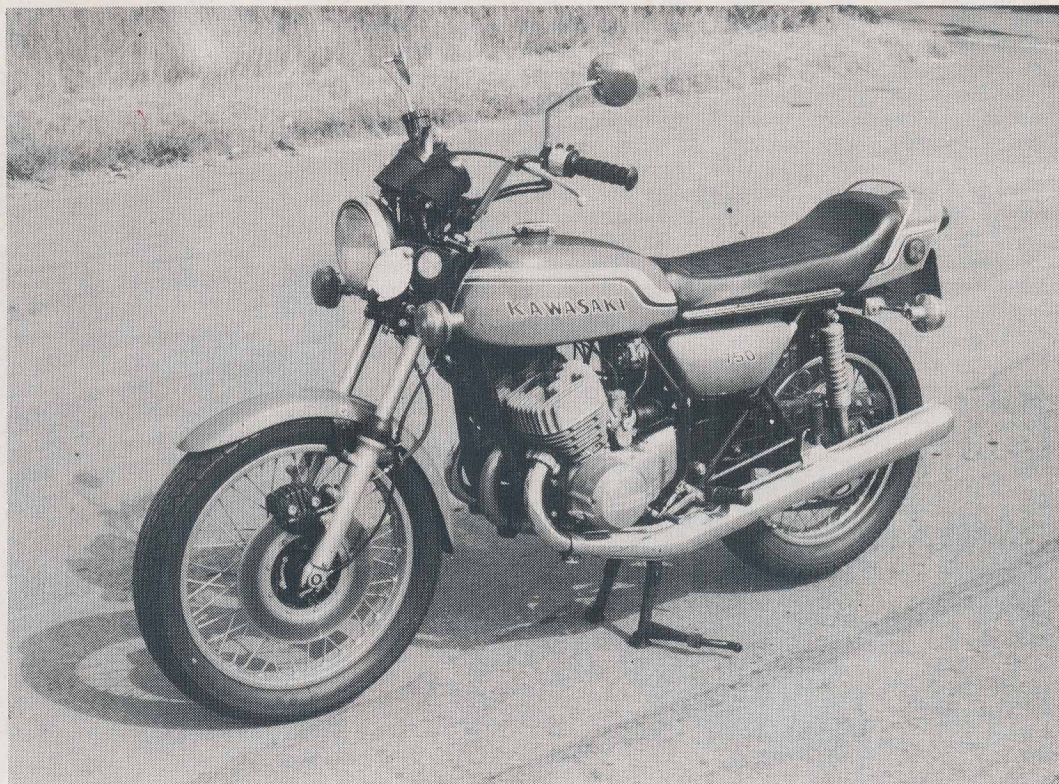
And within a decade of its creation it has already become difficult to disentangle the reality from pure legend. Could you really pull third gear wheelies downhill on

by Graham Sanderson

this air-cooled stroker, or was that the 500, or just a vivid imagination?

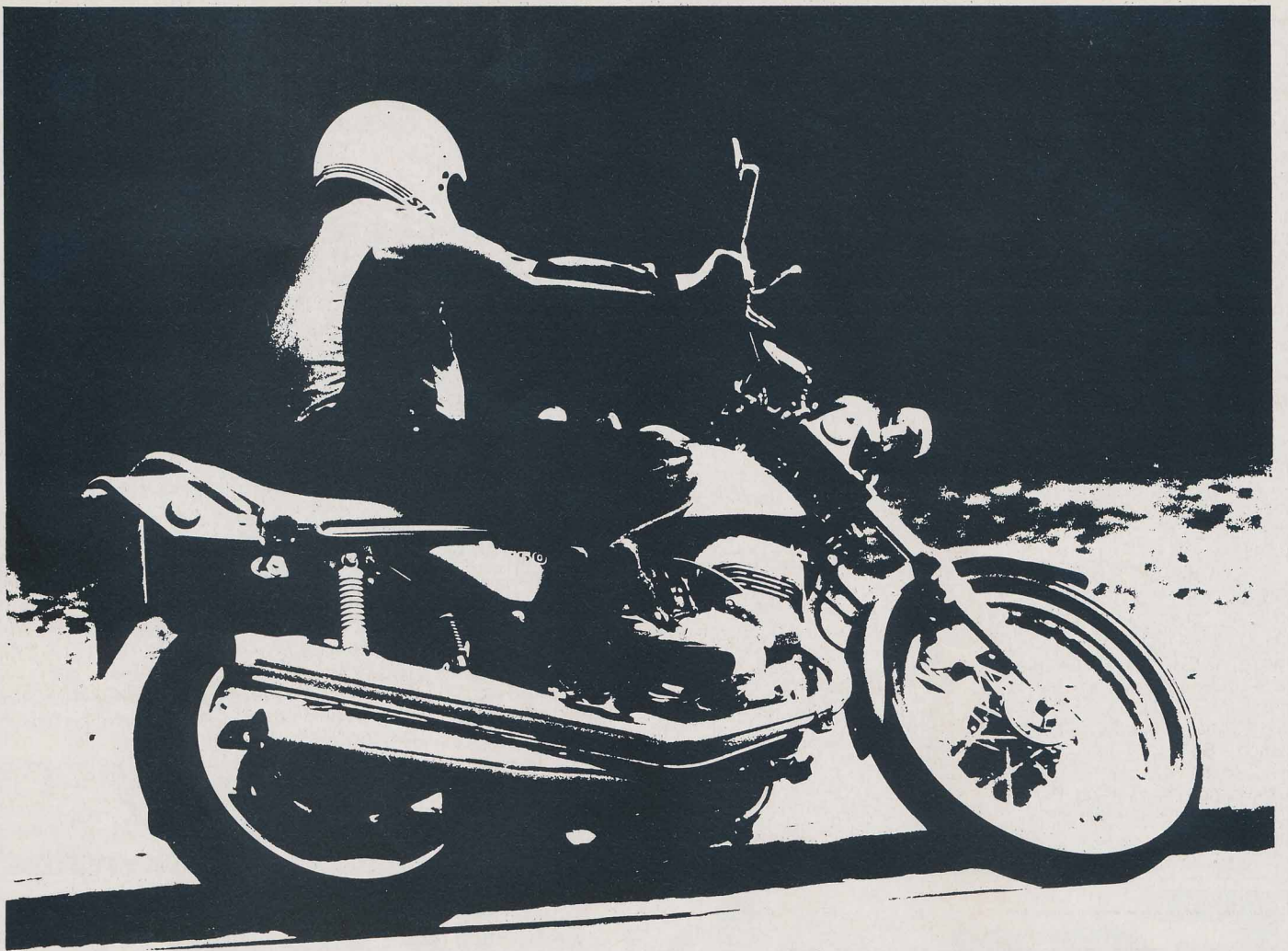
No doubt about it, the pre-oil crisis gas guzzler has been extolled with a far greater status than its really quite modest mantle deserves. But, like the inquisitive despatch rider who'd gone for the legend hook, line and sinker, it is time to disclose the comparatively ordinary reality of the Mach IV.

In truth, we can look back at the Kawasaki and bemusedly enquire what all the fuss was about. After riding the H2 belonging to Kawasaki UK's Tony Jakeman, the ma-



Kawasaki's 750cc Mach IV ... what was all the fuss about?

KAWASAKI MACH IV 750



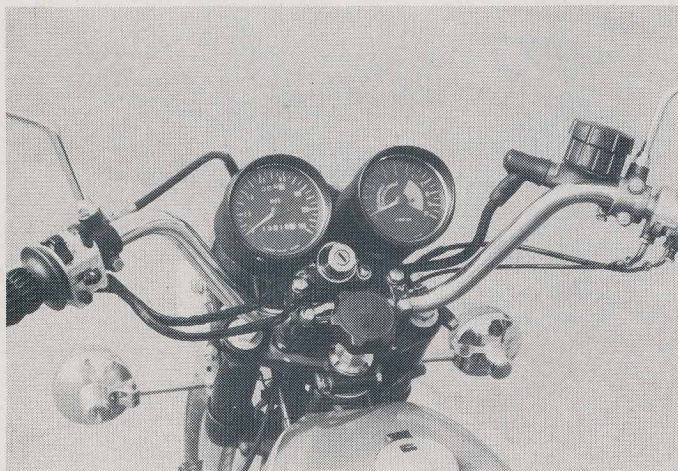
chine emerged as nothing more exciting than a titillating combination of still orange and fizzy champagne with its only truly legendary component being the unbelievable fuel consumption which somehow epitomises the early seventies.

Several years before environmental paranoia reached State-side fever pitch it was evidently considered acceptable to hit reserve in 70 miles, and average barely 25mpg with 20mpg just round the corner. Could it be that the Mach IV used petrol, not water, for cooling?

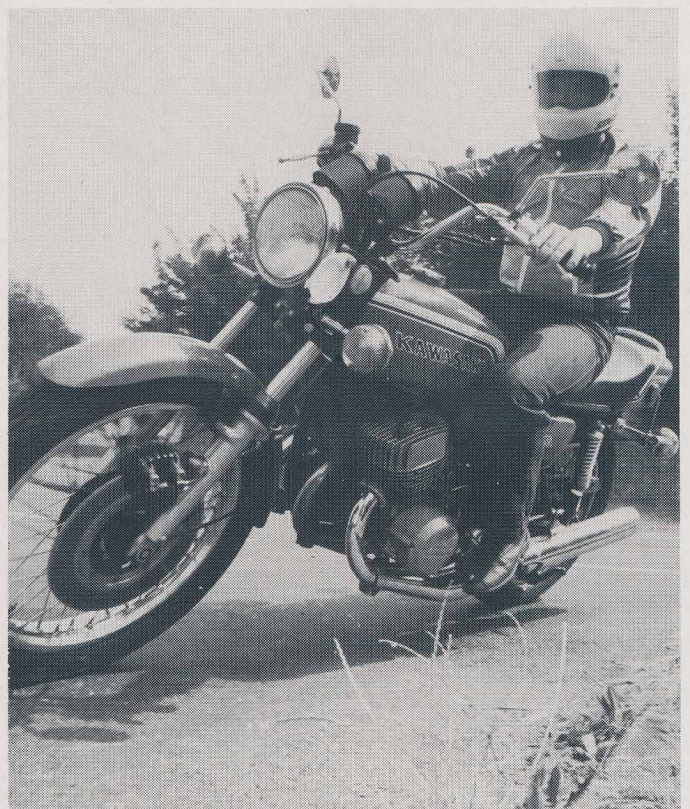
But regarding performance, I too had been deceived by the legend into thinking that the only bikers who could really ride the Mach IV were those with hairs sprouting from the palms of their hands. As I rode this machine, imported from the USA by enthusiastic Mr Jakeman, it became patently obvious that the patriarch of whizz-bang high performance motor cycles had produced a machine which was far easier to ride than the earlier 500 triples.

Furthermore, it was obvious that the comparatively civilised nature of the 750 had become

In its heyday the Mach IV was considered a frightening machine—nowadays it's pretty tame.



Controls are about as they should be, with all switches on the left handlebar.



Handling was surprisingly good, considering the spindly frame tubes.

engulfed by the horror stories associated with the 500 as time erased the lines between fact and fantasy.

The wide three-cylinder motor was noisier than a crowd of schoolgirls at a Wembley hockey international, a most fearful cacophony of mechanical momentum. But below about 4,000rpm the engine was reasonably tractable, suffering nothing like the knife-edge power band of the 500, and after someone else had drawn our attention to an uncleanly firing middle pot (something for which they were renowned) the performance was perky.

The inevitable vibration coupled with those shrieking exhausts no doubt increased the sensation of speed, but the Mach IV is no match for the more sophisticated approach of contemporary machines.

Its road test top speeds varied between 110 and 120mph, with standing quarters around the 13second/100mph mark, although Tony's model with high yankee handlebars coupled with I-don't-know-what produced a horrifying straight-line wobble around 90mph. So we bottled out of speed-testing this one.

Nevertheless, save for the requirement to drive it through corners, its handling came as a

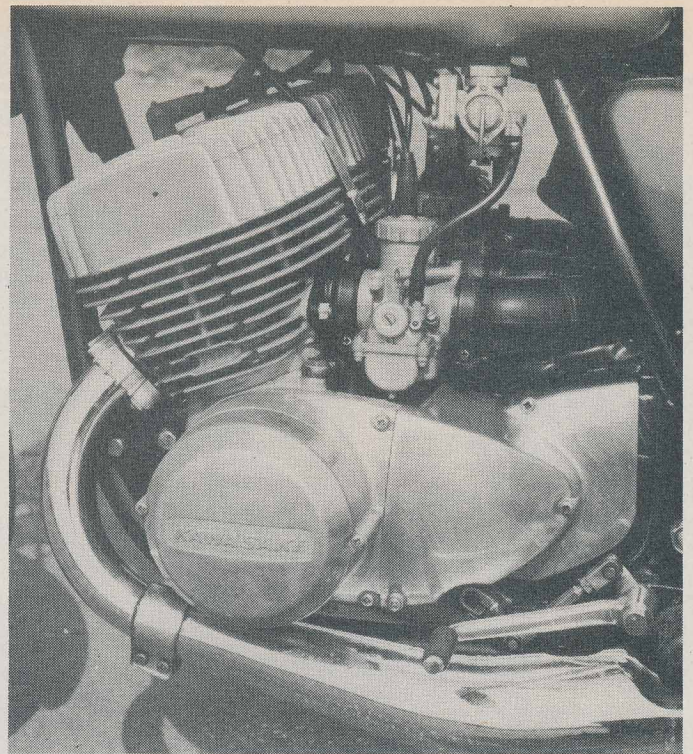
pleasant surprise. And further exposing the generally held belief that Japanese suspension has always been soft and mushy, the Mach IV units were pretty harsh, making for a generally uncomfortable long ride when the scantily padded seat is considered.

Of course, the most relevant question posed by the Mach IV is how much progress has been made by the Japanese industry in the decade since the triple. The answer is considerable, but it's not fundamental and certainly not in the order of Wright Brothers to Space Shuttle.

Judging by the Mach IV the Japanese have made enormous strides with braking and tyres, both of which were pretty awful on the Kawasaki. Clutches are lighter these days, monoshock handling usually, but not always, much better and frames sturdier; you wouldn't believe the puny diameter of the Kawasaki's frame tubing.

Modern motor cycles are more tractable, comfortable, comparatively fuel efficient while even modern 550s will outperform the Mach IV in every way.

With such statements of the obvious I guess I should be taking a sociology degree at some third rate polytechnic, but the Kawasaki lent a deal of perspective and



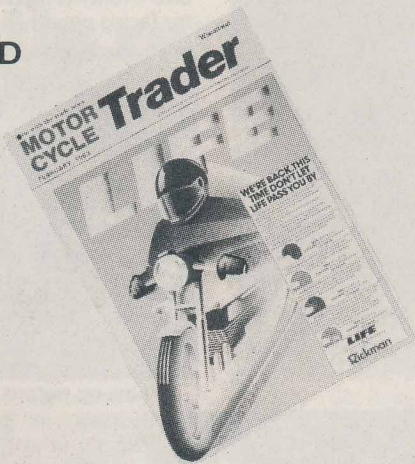
Heart of the beast—the air-cooled three-cylinder two-stroke engine dominates the machine.

reality to what everyone thought or hoped was true. And while the Mach IV showed itself to be no saint, it certainly wasn't a sinner

either. Having dispensed with that legend, whatever it was, now what about this King Arthur chappie . . .

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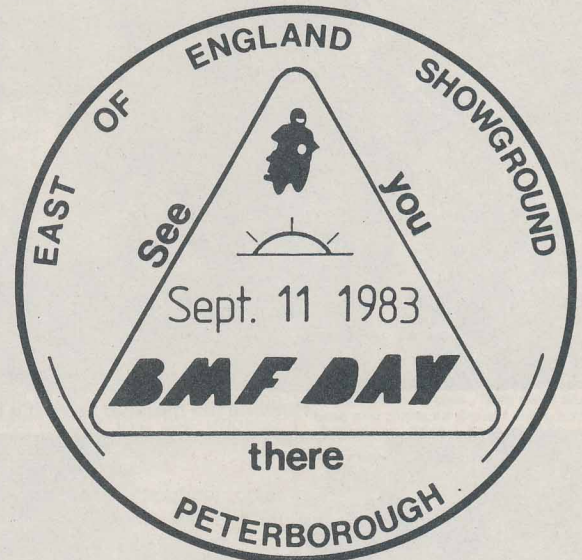
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