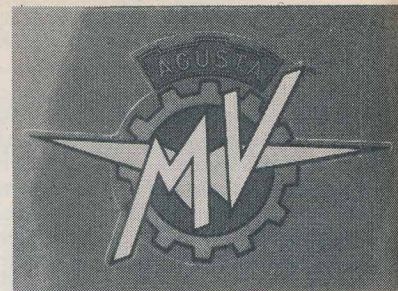


Rocket in retrospect

MV AGUSTA 832 MONZA

by Mat Oxley



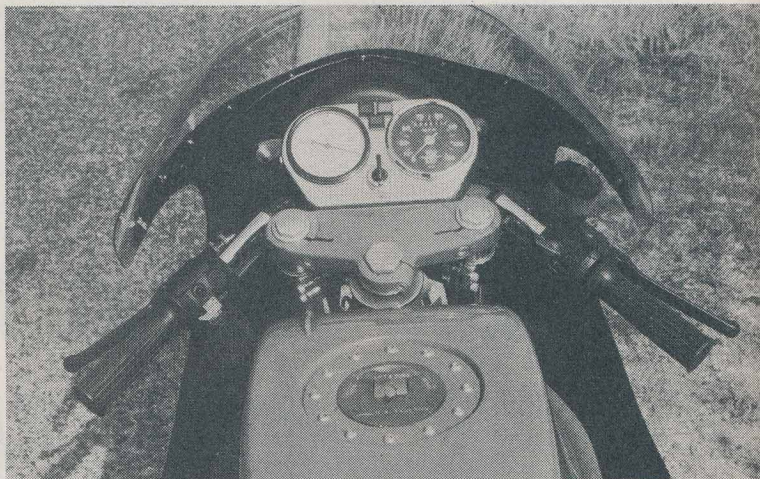
Rear end of the MV Magni Monza is dominated by Magni's curvaceous and very musical pipes. John Lee retained the standard shaft drive set up rather than fit the Magni chain kit purely for convenience's sake.

OF ALL the marques ever to have graced road and track, few are remembered with such reverence as MV Agusta. The fire engine red racing machines dominated world championship road racing for almost two decades, winning world titles in the hands of Hailwood, Agostini, Carlo Ubbiali, Surtees and Read.

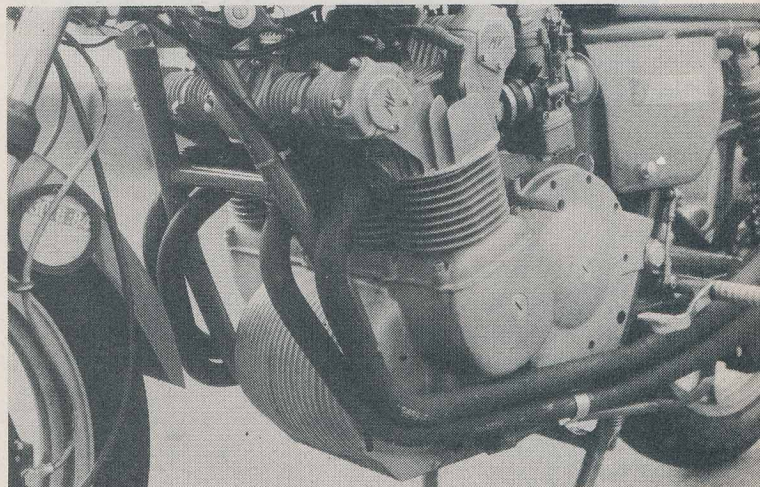
The Verghera factory will always be remembered for those track successes rather than for production of roadsters, which eventually ceased in early 1979—four years after MV won their last world crown. But even though the MV road bikes were never as

successful as the races the factory's line of road going fours are still some of the most sought-after machines in the world.

The first MV four racer was launched in 1950 in 500cc form and owed much to the design of the old Gilera four, largely due to the fact that Gilera's designer, Ing. Pietro Remor, had left Gilera to join MV in 1947. Initially the factory only produced small-capacity road bikes including 125s, 175s and 250s. It wasn't till 1965 that the first road-going four made its debut as a 600cc machine, leading to a 743cc version and the 750 Super Sport that made its appear-



John Lee's own cast console unit houses tacho, speedo and a warning lights. Tacho operates from 5,000rpm to 15,000rpm. BMW switchgear replaces awful standard MV gear while British made tank uses aircraft type filler.



Magni motor uses two twin barrels instead of the standard MV set-up of four separate units. Removing the crankshaft is relatively simple and can be done without disturbing the crankcases—just remove head and barrels and undo bolts at base of barrels and the crank pulls straight out

● **They say nostalgia isn't what it used to be. The last MV Agusta rolled off the Verghera factory line early in 1979 but the name that won 38 world road race titles lives on in every motor cyclist's mind. But were MV roadsters all they were cracked up to be? Mat Oxley rode an immaculate Magni Monza to find out. Also, Editor Graham Sander-son looks behind the Kawasaki 750 Mach IV legend to reveal the bitter truth. Was it the meanest, hairiest, fastest stroker ever?**

ance in 1971.

The Super Sport was claimed to produce 78bhp and lasted till 1974 when it was replaced by the 750S. Further development of the S led to the 790cc America and finally to the 832cc Monza.

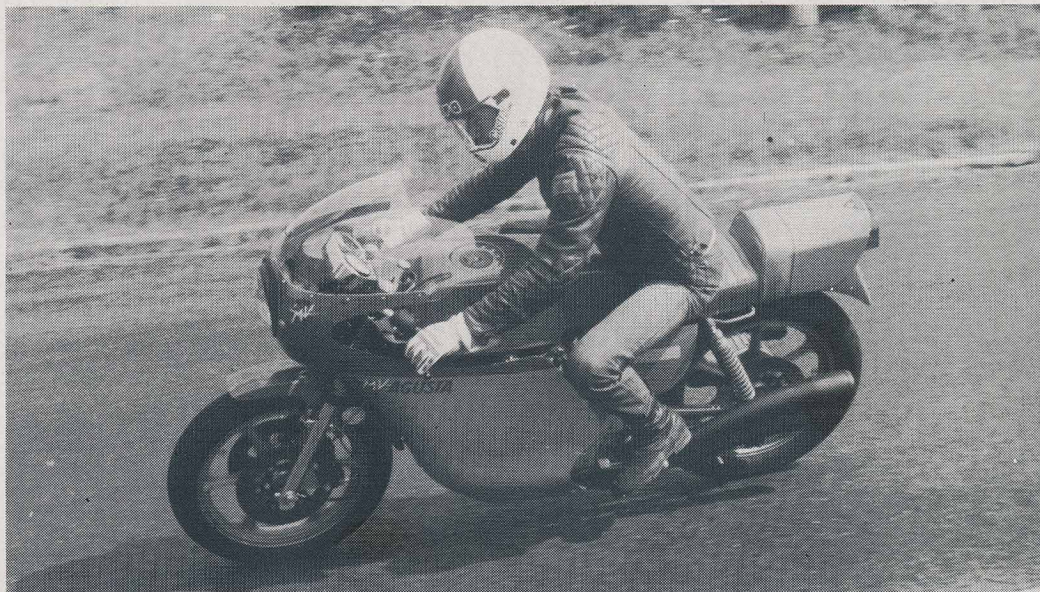
By the time these machines were in production the MV race effort had already ceased to be a competitive force in GP racing and the motor cycle section of the factory was well on its way to total decline. Intervention by the Italian government and news of a flat-four motor under development did little more than raise short-lived hopes and in April, 1979, the last MV motor cycle rolled out of the factory doors.

Motor cycle production had always been just a side line for the wealthy Agusta family and since motor cycle production ended the factory has concentrated on the more profitable manufacture of helicopters. But the legendary Arturo Magni, who led the MV team to many of its track successes, is still involved with the marque and before the final collapse of the factory produced a special race kit for the 832cc Monza.

There are few MVs left on the road now—estimates vary between 90 and 150 for Britain—but there are certainly very much fewer kitted out with Magni's special bits. One such machine has fallen into the hands of John Lee, who recently established Verghera Engineering specialising in renovating MVs to their original glory.

Despite their legendary status, road-going MVs were never noted for quality of finish or reliability. Horror stories involving four-figure spares prices abound, and John's machine was in a real state when he came to strip it down. The cylinder head had to be returned to the factory (who are only just ending manufacture of spare parts), for major surgery. The head had actually melted in places and all four pistons had been badly damaged. One of the twin-pot barrels was four thou higher than the other and needed skimming. The crank was running out of true and major machining of the crankcases was necessary to get things right.

John has access to lathes and other machine equipment so all



Steering on the Monza is good, though ride on this particular model is spoiled by over-hard Koni rear damper units

the work was possible, but in total he reckons to have spent something like 350 hours on restoring the machine. In addition to getting the motor running properly John has also altered many chassis parts to make the MV more practical. Many of the original parts, including switchgear and footrests, are horribly cumbersome and ill fitting so new gear seemed

the only answer.

A new cast and chromed clock console replaces the tatty and ugly standard item, slimline footrests and foot controls have been cast in favour of the overweight originals, BMW switchgear replaces the almost unusable MV items while a new seat, tank, headlamp and Goodridge Aero-quip hose all make the MV more

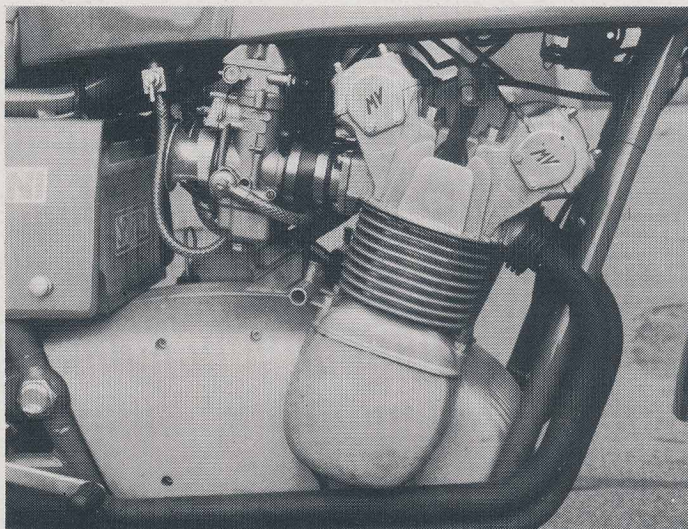
rideable.

Of course real purists will criticise the end product as being non-standard but there can be little doubt that the machine is superior to the standard offering.

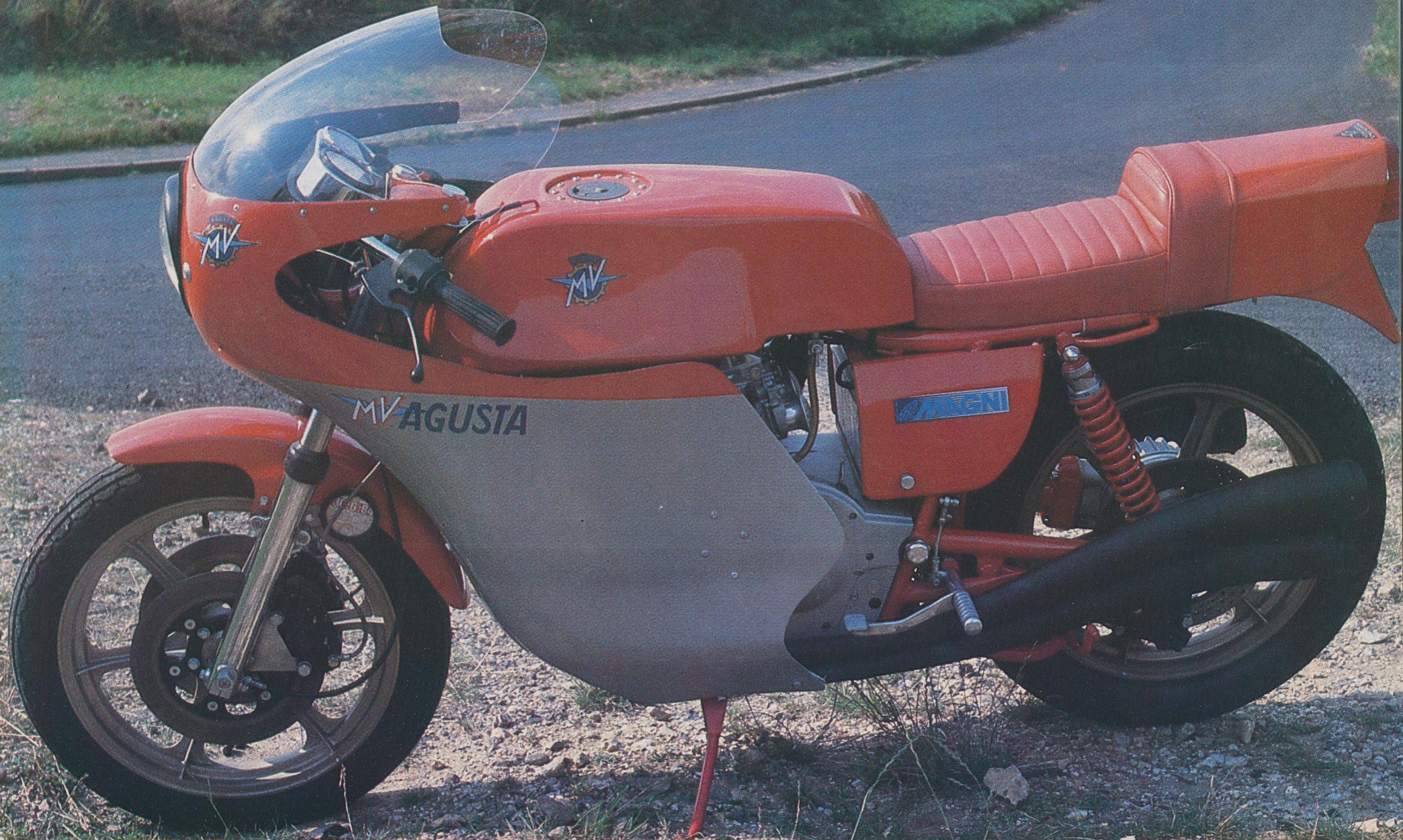
The Magni engine kit already fitted to the bike when John took it over provides a considerable power boost and is more than just a few bolt-on bits. The four separate standard barrels are replaced by twin items that raise the capacity to 862cc and compression to 10.5:1.

The standard head is retained but ported by the factory to improve flow. Standard 26mm Dellortos are discarded in favour of a bank of 30mm powerjet Dellortos, and while the stock exhaust cam stays a more radical inlet cam comes with the kit. Most noticeable change from the outside is that curvaceous set of all black pipes.

Top speed of the Magni Monza is reputed to be 150mph, though in our all-too-brief test ride we never realised that figure. Magni quoted peak power at 9,500rpm and despite that comprehensive race tune and impressive top end power there is still plenty of low-down urge. The tach doesn't even register below 5,000rpm (or 90mph in top!) but the machine seems very tractable at low revs



Dohc motor is fed by 30mm power jet Dellorto carbs that give a good spread of power as well as reputed 150mph top speed. Fuel taps have been moved back from standard to make them more accessible



**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.

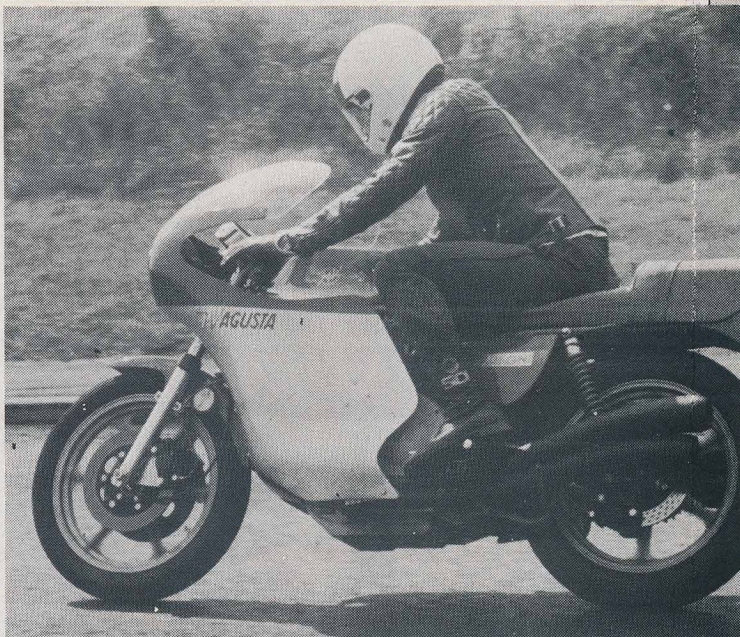
Despite the lack of a cush in the clutch or rear wheel, the transmission is remarkably smooth though this must largely be down to the immaculate engine preparation. Starting is electric only in the form of a belt-driven Bosch dyno start hidden beneath the rear of the crankcases. This piece of machinery 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.

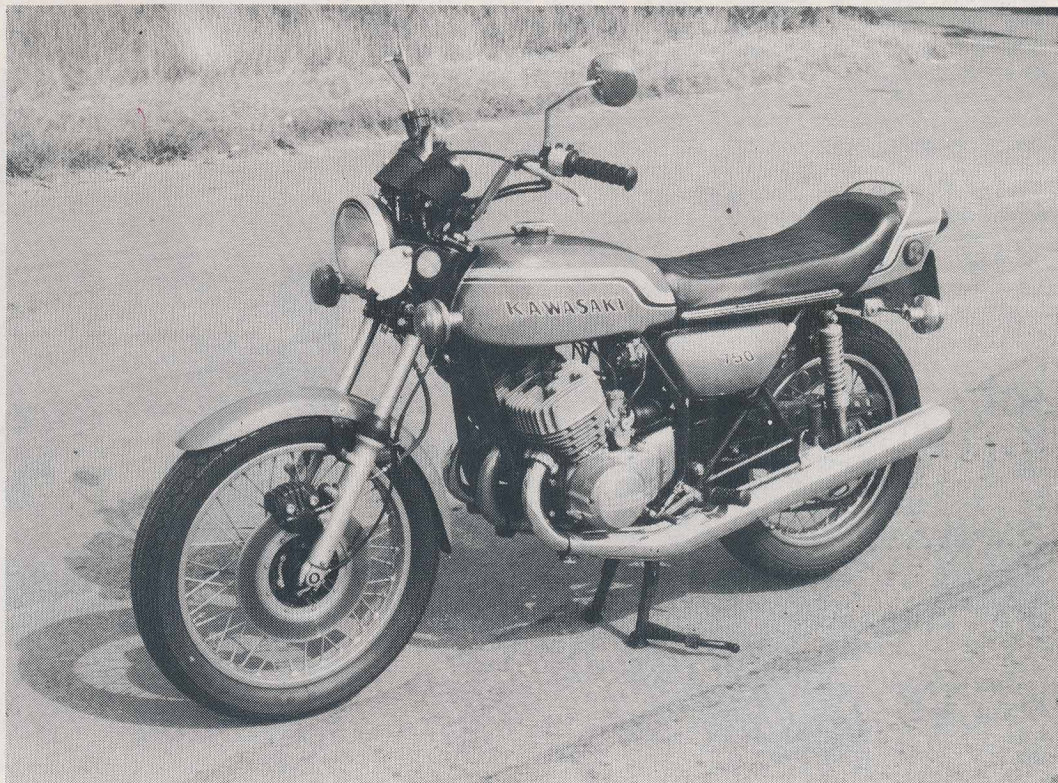
And within a decade of its creation it has already become difficult to disentangle the reality from pure legend. Could you really pull third gear wheelies downhill on

**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