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Illustration

**DIRT
BIKE
'79**



OFFICIAL

Show Guide Extra



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COVER: Roger De Coster with only blue sky surrounding his Suzuki, caught mid-flight by Nick Haskell.

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A GUZZI is good for you: no doubt about it. It may not be quite so good for your companion — in — life, for once you qualify for membership of the Moto Guzzi Club, you aren't going to be at home so much.

Having a Spada locked away in the garage is quite simply not on. Its a bike that begs to be ridden, the further the better. Why else should a trip down the road to fetch the Sunday papers involve a round trip of fifty miles, when normally a ten minute walk will suffice? Why else should I energetically enquire as to whether anyone in the office had any really urgent mail to be delivered by hand. To say, Cornwall, North Wales or Yorkshire. Yes, a Spada affects you like that. And that reason why is very plain once you press the starter motor and those two cylinders start to throb.

Out on the road, the Spada must rank with the best touring bikes available thanks to the effortless manner in which it consumes the miles: and *effortless* is the key word with this machine.

The engine produces its power in an effortless fashion. Those two big pots dictate the character of the machine. Lets face it, if you are among the many thousands who still hanker after the old 'five hundred' singles or even look to machines like Yamaha's 500 SR and the still to be announced Honda 500 single equivalent as being near to motorcycling perfection, then you would love the Guzzi. Because quite simply if a 500 single is good fun, a 1000 V-twin is twice as good! However, if you have been brought up on a diet of ultra-smooth Japanese fours, then you will probably find the Guzzi way of doing things more than a little crude and disappointing. And the loss will be all yours, because the Guzzi engine is a very fine piece of equipment, combining simplicity and ruggedness with a smooth power delivery and long term reliability.

Smoothness? Most certainly — depending on your yardstick. In my opinion any engine that fails to make its presence known by vibrating feet off footrests, by setting up a tingling in the finger tips and warming your posterior through the movement of the seat, is smooth. Sure, at tick-over (900 rpm) the bike can be seen gently shuddering, and on initial take-off or low rpm she throbs — but hell, who cares? So you know you're sitting behind a pair of big pistons, but it does no harm, disturbs your anatomy not at all, and if you consistently run the bike in top gear at low rpm, then you deserve all you get! No, to all intents and purposes, that V-twin is a


MOTO GUZZI



**SPI 1000
SPADA**

smoothie, but one that lets you know what's going on down there.

Now, who in their right minds *need* a full 1000 cc engine producing 90-100 bhp? Answer: No-one. So Guzzi have put practicality first and produced a big engine, but in a soft state of tune, so that there is a mere 70-80 bhp available. What a sensible course of action. There is ample power and equally ample low-down torque. You could ride the Spada all day, never exceed 5,000 rpm (around 80 mph in top) and enjoy yourself enormously. Alternatively, you can play racers, screwing it up to 8,000 rpm in each gear, change up a cog dropping a mere thousand revs in the process and repeat this exercise until you are travelling at a true 116 mph in fifth. Close the throttle at any time and you remember what engine braking *used* to be like: it really slows progress dramatically.

But the real beauty of the engine is that it always leaves you in control: you never get the feeling that the bike is running away from you. Power comes in smoothly and consistently. No anxious moments in the wet either — just solid, useful, power. And plenty of it, while all the time it feels so unhurried and relaxed. Sure, when you suddenly wind open the grip there is an initial staccato roar from the exhaust, which soon turns into a magnificent hum, but you never feel that the motor is straining.

Now shaft driven bikes always feature gearboxes that receive criticism for the clunkety-clunk manner of their operation. True, when pobbling along in first or second, the Spada (which has a different 'box to its 850 cc stablemates) could fall into this category, but wind on the power and it was perfectly good. Perhaps not in the 'fabulous' league, but smooth, utterly reliable, and virtually silent. The pedal is positioned very conveniently for fast operation and needed only a modest amount of travel. Nice, but neutral was not always that easy to locate and the corresponding light on the instrument, console was not always 100% truthful.

The term *effortless* also applies to the frame, or at least in the way in which it copes with the power output. Its not new, indeed it has been around for a long time, being used for the existing 850 models.

It works superbly well, so why change it? Cornering on a bike like this is an education, there just simply aren't any criticisms to make of its scratching ability. Mind you, with a total dry weight of only 460 lbs and a responsible amount of power, it is not being over-stressed. Which is how it should be.

Actually, when cornering, you initially do not realise just how well it handles: its just that a glance at the speedo shows you to be travelling a good deal faster than you seem, while all too often I found that I was slowing down too much for tight bends — the bike was capable of much better things. Hitting a pot-hole while banked over caused a quick twitch of the bars (smoothed by the steering damper) and no more. This was the bike, still on the right line, and me being thankful that I was Guzzi mounted.

Big fat Avon Roadrunners were fitted to the cast alloy rims of our machine instead of the stock fitment of Pirelli's. They worked superbly with plenty of grip, even when accelerating hard around bends: not once did they give cause of concern in the dry, while we had little

opportunity to try them in the rain. Suspension seemed fine if a little firm. Rear suspension is three-way adjustable for pre-load if you can be bothered to remove both silencers in order to get the relevant (supplied) spanner to turn the adjuster. Not so practical if you only occasionally carry passengers.

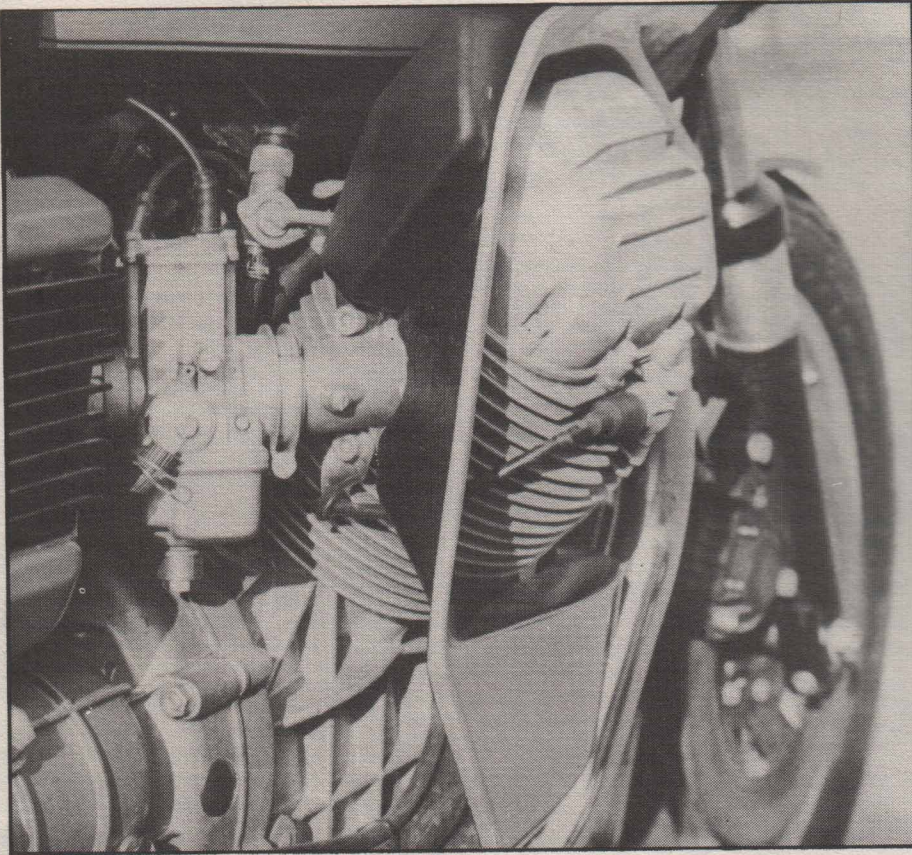
Braking. Now that really was effortless. The Press has for several years acclaimed the Guzzi integrated braking system as being the best around, and quite rightly so. But now it has been refined still further. The system is simple, but oh so effective. Pushing the foot brake pedal operates the rear disc and also activates the front left-hand disc, in an approximate ratio of 75:25. The conventional hand brake lever operates just the right hand front wheel disc. The new refinement concerns that integrated foot brake: the hydraulic fluid line has been fitted with a pressure limiter switch, so that should you panic and stamp on the pedal in an emergency, no way will those huge, cast iron discs (12in front 9in rear) lock your wheels. At least, not until your velocity has been knocked back to around 25mph. Mind you, remember that you still can be silly with the hand operated front right disc.

In practice, I soon lost the habit of a lifetime, and forgot about the 'traditional' front brake and relied on the foot pedal. Fantastic. Braking is so safe and reliable with this method. You stop securely in a dead straight line, and with a complete loss of dramatics. No more twitching back ends, no more lurid slides in the wet, just a very quick halt to progress. In practice the hand operated brakes main function is when manhandling the bike in a parking lot, or in congested low speed traffic.

Still on the 'effortless' theme, we come to the fairing. At first glance it looks a dead ringer of the BMW 1000RS full fairing, but although similar in appearance, there is one important difference: its a two-piece affair. The top half is handlebar mounted, the lower being attached to the frame — not that it is obvious to the eye, but thats all clever design. Actually the top piece over-laps the lower a little and a rubber skirt beneath the headlamp unit fills in the 'hole' around the fork legs. In practice that gives freedom from worries over steering lock, and permits the owner to fit a different set of handlebars, should he wish. It also



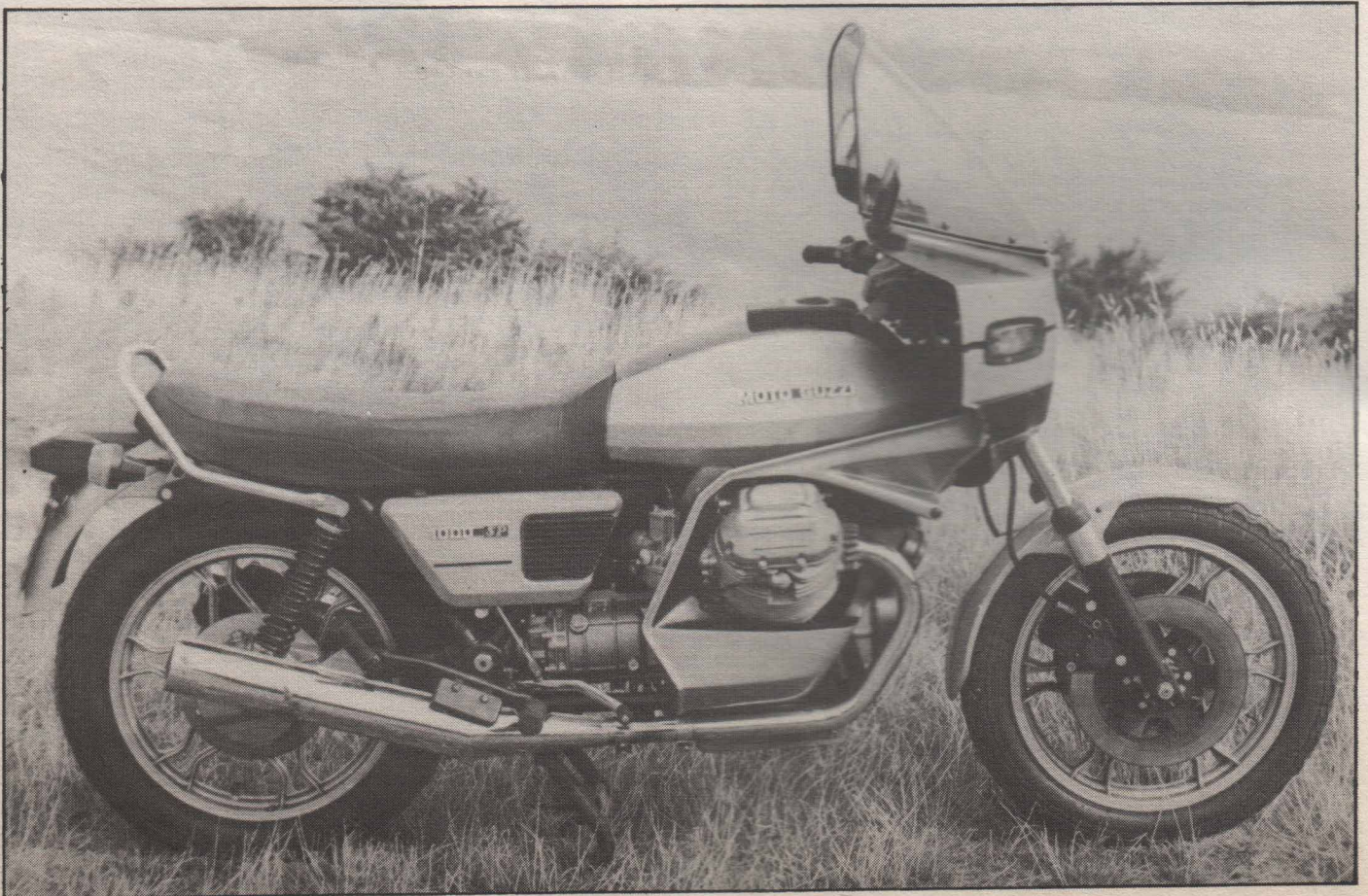
Where the Spada is at its best — touring in attractive countryside with plenty of interesting bends.



means less hassle should better engine access be required.

Now some people like fairings, others don't. But if you want a high speed tourer, then it must be an essential fitting. Perhaps you have forgotten what its like to arrive at a destination some hundred miles away, having travelled quite legitimately at 70 mph, without your arms feeling tired after combatting wind pressure. In my book you can keep the battle with the elements, sit me behind a fairing. And this one works, too. If you feel like playing games, ride behind a fairing like this and gently run your hand around the edges to detect the airflow. You find that even though your hand may be well above the top edge of the (tinted) screen it is in a calm pocket of air. Likewise, although your hands do not appear to be fully protected, neither cold air nor rain falls upon them. Although we only had a brief spell of rain during the test period it was clear that even in a downpour only a light oversuit would be necessary for protection. Edges of arms get directly wet, and in time water would run down your body, but you are not in any danger of the usual soggy

Above: rubber pads on the edges of the fairing hit the knees; they also obstruct fuel taps slightly but are retained by a single screw. Fairing hugs the cylinders tightly but does not reflect excessive noise. Below can be seen the clever design of the fairing — it looks like a one-piece affair, but in fact the upper and lower sections are separate. This enables the top fairing to be much closer to the rider without restricting steering lock.



feeling. Boots, however, are still essential: spray from the road is not deflected. Vision remains good: rain drops gently run down from the helmet crown onto the visor, but are easily wiped away.

The fairing also provides a suitable housing for instruments, and Moto Guzzi have jumped at the opportunity to provide them, in the form of matching speedo and rev counter, quartz clock (very useful that) and ammeter. In addition there are warning lights for indicators — which also operate as hazard warning lights — brake fluid level, oil pressure, high beam, neutral and "lights on". All are neatly set into a moulded plastic housing which completely hides the normal headlamp area, making for a very neat result.

By now you no doubt get the impression that this is the tourer to beat all tourers. With a motor producing plenty of power, an excellent chassis, first class weather protection and outstanding brakes. But that is only part of the story.

Where the machine does fall a bit flat is in the comfort stakes. No complaints with the saddle itself, it is firm yet comfortable, and has a full 26in of usable length, a point that pillion passengers appreciate. No, it's the riding position that offends. The first twelve miles from the Luton headquarters of importers Coburn and Hughes back to Hemel Hempstead were really most uncomfortable. I suffered cramp in my hip joints due to the high mounted footpegs, while my knees were bruised by the pads on the fairing edges. And my wrists ached.

Now at just over six foot and with a 33in inside leg measurement I am not such an unusual size, and lack of comfort is a rare occurrence. In truth, I soon became used to sitting further back on the seat so that my knees missed the fairing and if the bike were mine I would have removed the 1in thick pads anyway. Likewise, the cramp only returned once more in the following fortnight, but the high pegs do result in tightly folded joints. While the bars are comfortably narrow (27in) they do require quite a forward stance, and with the fairing fitted as standard, there is no wind pressure to support your weight. Thus your wrists take the strain, and suffer. The heavy action twistgrip was unfortunate too. I would prefer bars a little straighter, a couple of inches higher and preferably an inch or more further back.

But if you are unhappy with the footrest position, then it's hard luck. There is no method of adjustment available. Even if you get out the welding torch to shift the bar carrying

rider and pillion rests, the exhaust pipes prevent lower re-positioning.

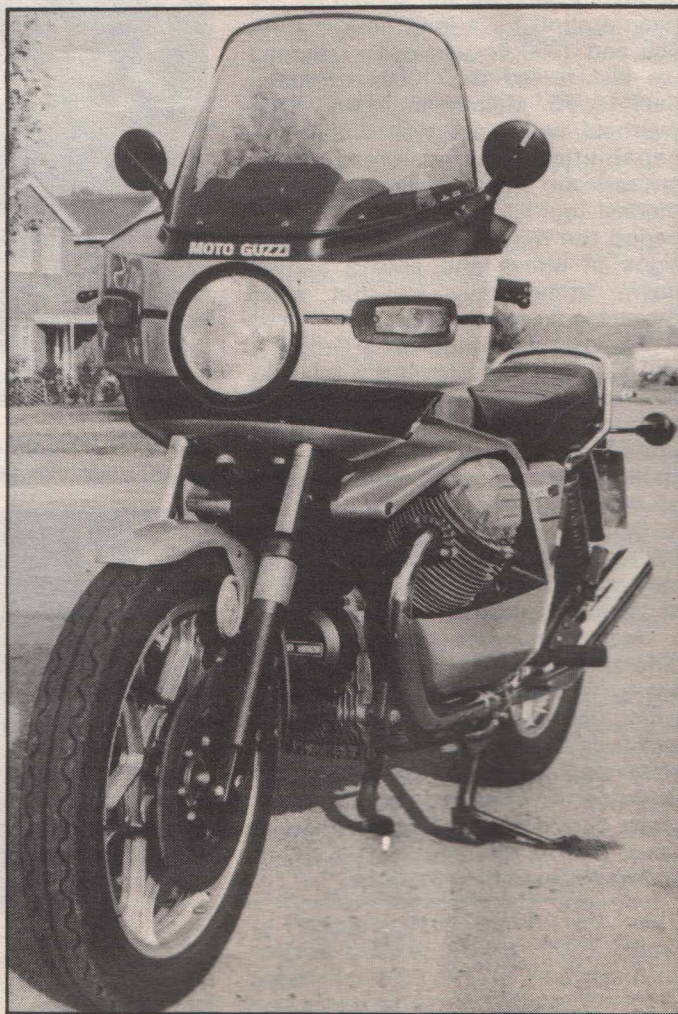
To continue with the complaints department, the warning lights for indicators and headlamp-on are too weak to be seen readily in bright daylight. This could so easily have been improved at the factory, and while they were at it, why not incorporate a rheostat so that the warning lights could be toned down for night use? Very cheap to do and it would remove unwanted glare.

Earlier I quite rightly praised the handling, but get up to around 105mph and the back end starts to feel insecure. Then it begins to weave. Quite why is hard to say. This could be alleviated by having the rear suspension on the softest pre-load setting but quite why this should be escapes me. Apparently this weave occurs when fitted with the standard Pirelli tyres as well, so it would appear that the tyres are not to blame. Personally, and as pure speculation, I wondered whether the spoilers on the fairing are the cause. These are narrow (3½in max) projections neatly moulded onto the fairings body which are designed to produce negative lift and keep the front wheel hard on the ground at high speed.

The airfoils in front of the cylinder heads are designed to produce negative lift and increase pressure on the front wheel at high speed. They may be small but they work — perhaps too well? Rear view mirrors are ball mounted for easy adjustment, and remained useful even at high touring speeds.

Initially sceptical, I was convinced of their effectiveness when I discovered how heavy the steering felt at around 90-100mph, and how the rear-view mirrors were now both out of adjustment. Clearly, the front end was being pulled down, and the machine was super stable. Until that is, the back end started to wriggle. If the front end is being loaded and thus reducing the amount of suspension travel available (and altering the trail), what is happening to the load on the rear suspension? The wobble never got out of hand and at that sort of velocity is rather academic, unless you do all your touring on disused airfields or don't value your licence very much anyway.

Italian switchgear has always been the cause of abuse, and while the latest CEV equipment on the Spada is a vast improvement it could be better. Specifically, the indicator switch has a very short throw and 'neutral' is thus hard to locate, and the single rocker switch for the headlamp flasher and hooter is too tricky to operate satisfactorily. Otherwise all is well, and at least there is no danger of inadvertently turning off the lights when reaching for the dipswitch. The headlamp



Instrument panel is impressive, and neat. Key has round 'knob' top, folds to fit pocket.

should be halogen, it isn't and it needs more light than a 45 watt bulb can produce.

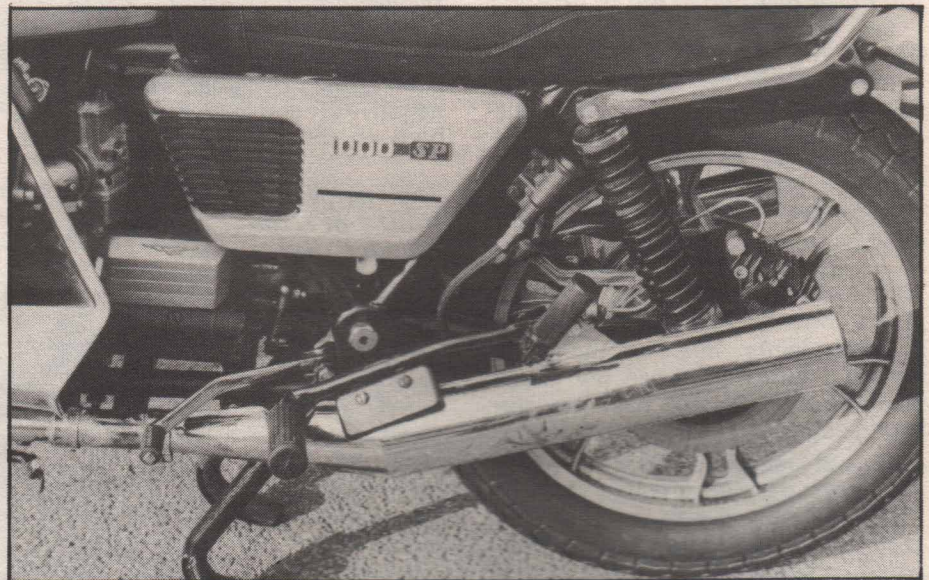
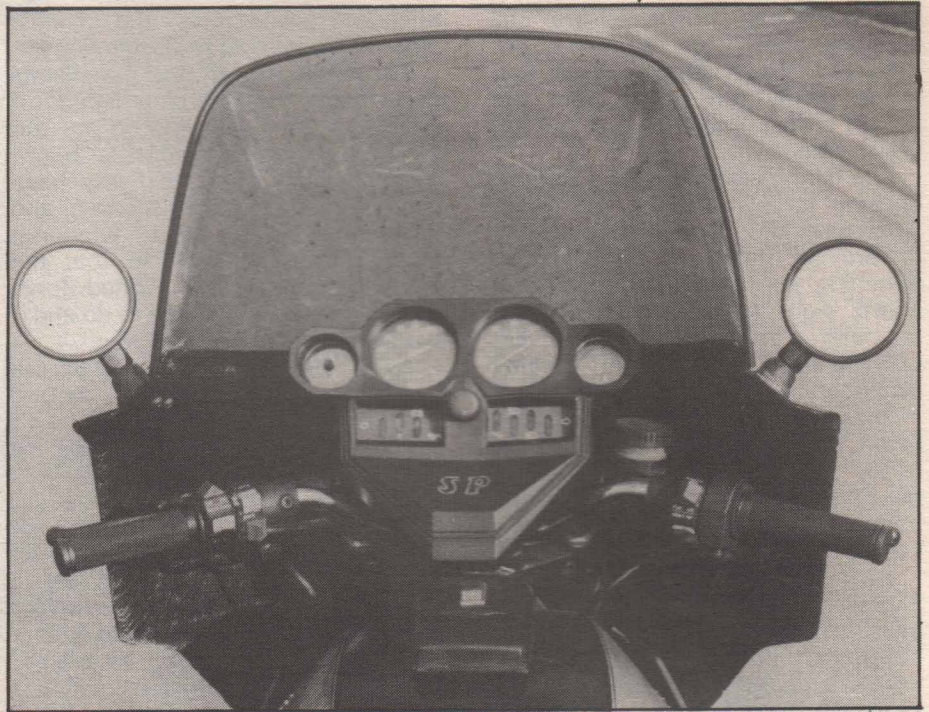
Turning back to the practicalities of life, the Spada excels.

Putting it on to the centre stand requires less effort than the majority of 250 bikes, thanks to the designer getting his sums right. No lifting is required at all: just press lightly on the foot lever, and up she comes. And I mean lightly. The seat lifts up from the front, is held in place with a stay, and reveals the enormous battery and tool kit both retained by rubber straps. Likewise, that enormous 5 1/4 gallon tank can be removed in seconds without use of a single tool. Neat. Side covers lift off to reveal electrics and hydraulics. The rear spindle can be removed without touching the silencers, though on the debit side they are swept up so much that they severely restrict the size of panniers that could be carried.

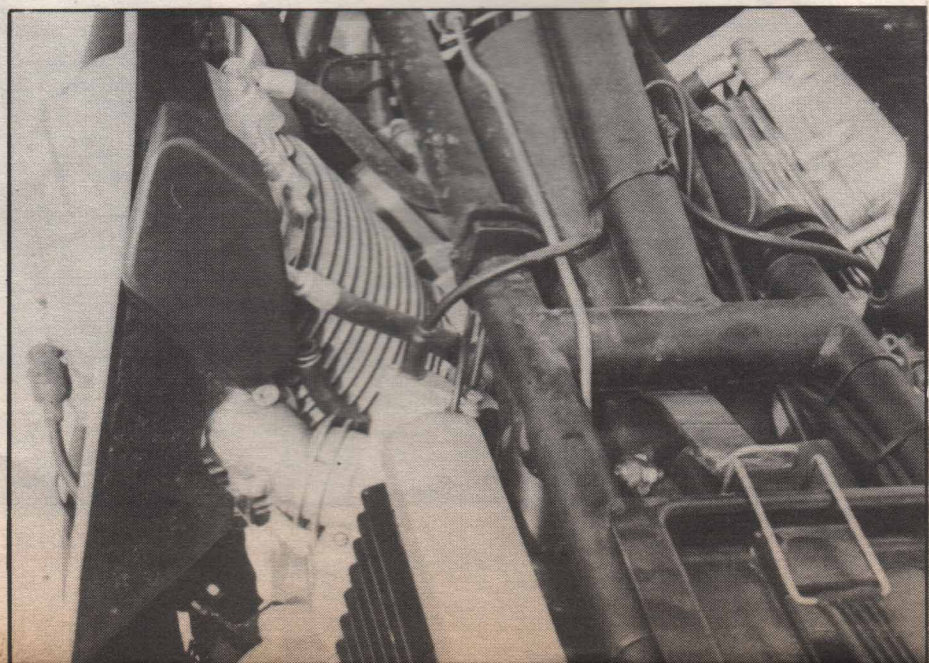
Engine reliability is not a matter of speculation but fact. Designed like a car engine in that the sump may be dropped to service the bottom end, it is as rugged and reliable as a big, lightly-stressed engine should be. Its been around for a long time in both 850 and 1000 cc versions — indeed we last tested the 1000 automatic back in '75. Maintenance, and even overhaul work, are well within the capabilities of any reasonably enthusiastic amateur and a relatively modest tool kit. Throughout the test period the motor never showed any signs of stress and always settled down immediately to that solid thumping tick-over. Nice.

Yes, you feel good on a Guzzi. It looks superb and provides a relaxing ride in that you can travel quickly without over-stressing or over-stretching yourself. At £2,299 it is quite competitive with the products of Japan, but if you cannot quite run to that then the "naked" 850 T 3 at £1750 is a steal. And talking of costs, remember one point. The actual price of a bike is not the list price quoted by a dealer. In real terms it is the difference between the amount you pay for it and the amount you receive when you eventually sell it. What makes a bike depreciate quickly? A new, replacement model of course. Question: how many years is it since Moto Guzzi last *replaced* a model? Could be that this bike costs a whole lot less than you first thought.

Tank lifts off (no tools required) to reveal rigid, neatly welded frame, cartridge type air filter lives in housing between the cylinders.

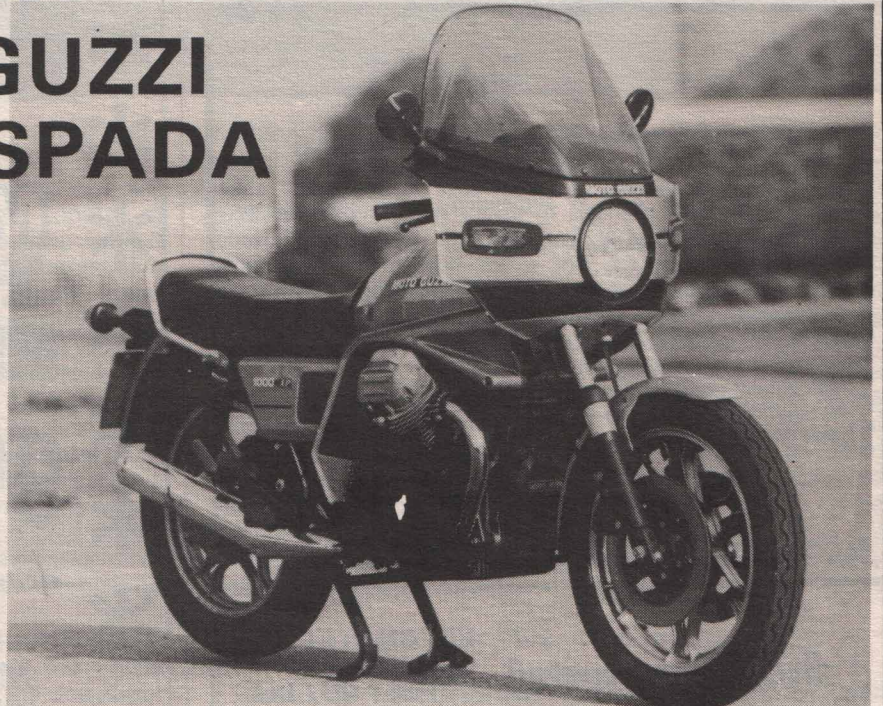


Footrest position is fixed by silencer location and comfort suffers. Side covers lift off instantly, but neither they nor seat are lockable.



SPECIFICATIONS

MOTO GUZZI SP1000 SPADA



ENGINE

Type: 90 degree all alloy transverse four stroke V-twin. All plain bearing engine with two mains and split shell big ends. One piece forged crankshaft. Steel con-rod split across big end eye.

Valve operation: Pushrod from camshaft between cylinder bases in crankcase. Clearance by screw and locknut on rocker tips.

Capacity: 948.8cc.

Bore and stroke: 88 x 58mm.

Compression ratio: 9:2:1.

Carburation: 2 x 32mm Dell Orto instruments with mechanical accelerator pumps. Single paper cartridge filter.

Lubrication: 5.5 pint wet sump via high pressure delivery only gear pump. Replaceable paper cartridge and washable wire gauze filters.

Electrics: 12v 32a/h battery charged by crankshaft mounted 190w alternator. Coil and contact breaker ignition.

Claimed power: 70-80 bhp at 7,300 rpm.

TRANSMISSION

Primary: None.

Clutch: Dry twin plate diaphragm unit mounted on crankshaft end.

Gears: Overall ratios, 11.64, 8.08, 6.09, 5.05, top 4.36:1. Selection by left side, one down and three up foot lever.

Final drive: Shaft, within right side pivoted fork leg. 4.71:1 reduction.

FRAME

Full loop duplex cradle in all welded steel tube. Detachable lower left cradle rail for engine removal. Fully triangulated and welded rear sub-frame.

SUSPENSION

Front: Two-way damped Moto Guzzi tele-fork with De Carbon damping.

Rear: Pivoted fork with two-way damped, load adjustable suspension units.

WHEELS

Front: Standard equipment: Pirelli 100/90 H18 tyre on WM3 x 18 cast alloy wheel. Duplex 11.8in. cast iron disc brakes with double-acting Brembo hydraulic calipers. Left brake coupled to rear brake via foot pedal and split system with pressure limiter. Right brake operated by conventional handlebar lever.

Rear: Standard equipment: Pirelli 100/90 H18 tyre on WM3 x 18 cast alloy wheel. Single 9in. diameter cast iron disc brake with double acting Brembo hydraulic caliper.

EQUIPMENT

5.25 gal. (24 litre) steel fuel tank inc. 5 pint (3 litres) reserve. Took kit. Non-lockable dual seat and side panels. Turn signals. Pillion grab handle. Centre and prop stands. 7in. (157mm) x 45/45w headlamp. Electric start only. Two piece group fairing with tinted screen. Ball-mounted rear-view mirrors. Steering damper. Steering lock. Integrated braking system. Hazard lights, twin horns, headlamp flasher.

INSTRUMENTATION

Matched illuminated speedometer and rev counter, quartz clock and ammeter in plastic console with charging circuit, brake fluid level, oil pressure, headlight, neutral gear, main beam warning lights.

DIMENSIONS

Weight: Claimed dry, 460lbs (210Kg).

Wheelbase: 58in. (1473mm).

Ground clearance: 6.2in. (157mm)

Seat height: 30in. (762mm).

PERFORMANCE DATA

Fuel consumption: Mild cruising 50/70 mph, 49mpg. Fast riding 43mpg. Around town 43mpg. Fuel quality: Four star (98 octane) used throughout test period.

Speed: Highest one way with 200lb rider in storm suit crouched behind screen, 116mph.

Speedometer accuracy: 7mph fast at 60mph.

CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Importers: Moto Guzzi UK Ltd., 21 Crawley Road, Luton, Beds.

Colours available: Silver, gold, metallic blue

Price: £2,299 including VAT.

Delivery charge: £20.00 extra.

Warranty: 18 months parts and labour with Autoguard policy.

SPARE PARTS (inc. VAT)

Exhaust valve (each).....	£10.21
Inlet valve.....	£9.19
Piston (each, complete with rings, etc.).....	£42.15
Clutch plates: drive (pair).....	£17.66
driven (one).....	£8.19
Exhaust pipe.....	£19.05
Silencer.....	£38.07
Balance pipe.....	£27.17
Speedo cable.....	£4.39
Contact breakers (each).....	£13.60

THE COMPETITORS

	Price £	Max mph	Overall mpg	Fuel tank (gals)	Claimed bhp	Dry weight (lbs)	Type	Warranty
Moto Guzzi Spada	2299	116	43	5.25	72	460	OHV V-Twin	18 months P & L (Autoguard)
BMW R100RS	2999	120	47	5.0	70	463	OHV Horiz. twin	12 months P & L
Honda GL1000 K2	1995	118	40	4.2	80	571	Liq. cooled flat four	12 months P & L
Kawasaki Z1000	1925	125	47	3.6	83	529	DOHC 4 cylinder	12 months/ 12,000 miles P & L
Laverda 1200	2495	130	40	4.0	85	503	DOHC 3 cylinder	6 months P & L
Moto Guzzi V-1000 Automatic	1999	112	40	5.3	71	560	OHV V-Twin	18 months P & L (Autoguard)
Suzuki GS1000E	1875	136	52	4.2	87	516	DOHC 4 cylinder	6 months P & L
Yamaha XS1100	2110	135	40	5.2	95	564	DOHC 4 cylinder	6 months/ 10,000 miles P & L