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MV AGUSTA  
THE BATS HAVE LEFT THE BELLTOWER

パフォーマンス・バイクス

# Performance BIKES



75 SUZUKA GP

FOR THE RIDER WHO FREQUENTS THE HIGHWAY

高性能二輪車

WITH RESPECT AND COMMITMENT

Performance BIKES

50 SUPER MOTO

CUSE ME, YOU JUST RAN OVER MY NECK

FREE POSTER - WHITHAM AT DAYTONA

PROMOTIONAL DEVICE

**C**over story: Yamaha spent several grand flying three UK bike journos to Egypt and entertaining them with everything from dancing girls to syrup of figs in the hope that said journos would say something nice about the 750 Super Ténéré. Pic: Kel Edge.

# Performance BIKES

A B C

JULY — DEC 1989

6 7, 8 6 2

In tests, eight out of ten budgies who expressed a preference defecated on it.

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MAY, 1989



M A Y 1 9 8 9

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- 60. **HUB OF THE UNIVERSE** — If you're forked off with telescopic forks, here is a large number of expensive alternatives.
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## ROAD TESTS

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Who said Rupert was clean living? TDR headbanging at Pembrey — p48.



The Japanese do weird things to BMWs. Pro Twins in colour — p94.

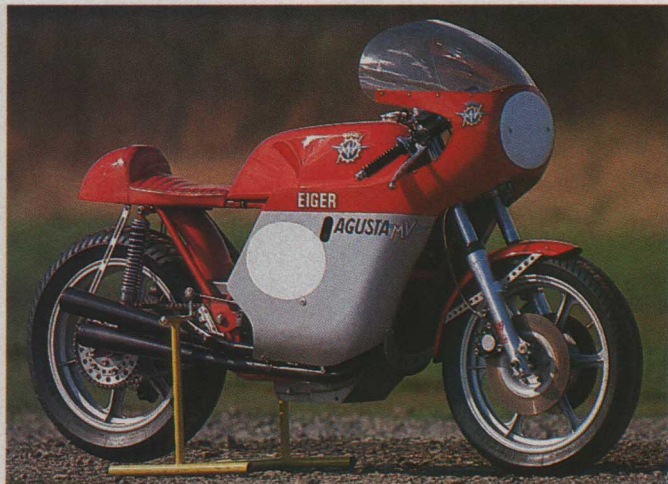


The most expensive Performance Bike in the world is the MV Agusta — p16.



Pete thinks that the new CBR600 looks like a thermos flask — p24.

# LEGE



**Created and designed by Italian nobility kept alive and raced by an engineer from Birmingham. The Dave Kay MV will surprise those that still think of MVs as old classics.**

There are three main characters in this story; two Italians and a man from the Black Country. The first Italian is Count Agusta, playing a leading role for reasons far too obvious to merit explanation; the second is Arturo Magni, an ex-employee of MV Agusta now specialising in the manufacture of pricey bolt-on accessories for the MV marque, amongst others. The man from the Black Country is Dave Kay, who has the distinguished pleasure, amongst this star studded cast, of acting as the top billing.

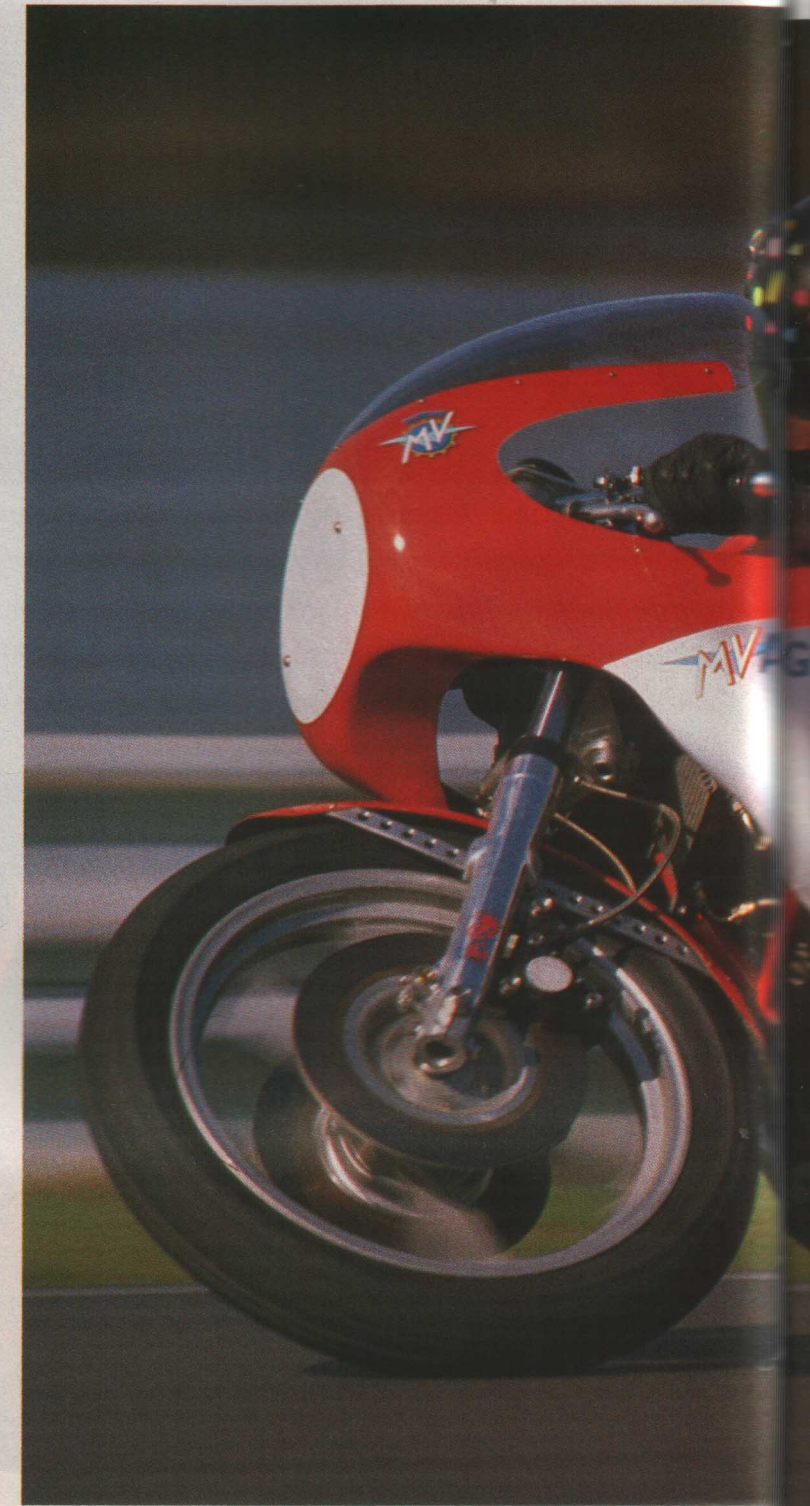
Dave Kay is an MV fancier of the first order. He indulges in them for a living and for relaxation and enjoyment. This is a hobby that has turned into an obsession, but only in the most constructive sense of the word.

The first part of the story starts way back in 1971 when the engine in Dave's bike rolled out of the small output production line wrapped inside a 750S. This was the bike that MV thought would regain the credibility lost by probably the most horrifically ugly Italian bike ever, the MV Agusta 600 four (the first production bike to sport disc brakes and electric start). But it was not to be; the 750 Sport — all the 750 fours — were to prove the downfall of the marque in the late

seventies. The massively over engineered engine was far too complex to be cost effective and the year of its launch, 1969, saw the arrival of a considerably cheaper across the frame four, the 750 Honda. The MV 750 was almost doomed before it even started.

After the collapse of the factory, MV Agusta's chief Guru, Arturo Magni, set up shop on his own. Fortunately, for Magni, Count Agusta had originally specified that all his road bikes should be designed in such a way as to make them uncompetitive on the race track. Therefore, any dyed in the wool enthusiast that thought MV — even roadgoing ones — belonged on a circuit would have to buy a host of bits and pieces from him before racing could even be remotely possible. Magni produced frame kits to house the venerable inline four; chain drive conversions to eliminate the unpleasant effects of shaft final drive which, as Agostini found in the 1972 Imola 200 race, was the Achilles heel when subjected to racing stresses; special barrels, cast in pairs rather than individually and a multitude of other, less significant, bolt-on bodywork accessories.

Now Dave Kay has been having an affair with MVs for many years. His company Eiger



Engineering ("We've had to climb f...ing mountains to get where we are"), which he runs with his son Mark, performs the tricky and extremely labour intensive jobs that are essential to keep these beasts running and racing. Spare parts for the gear driven, double overhead

cam, in-line four are quickly becoming as rare as the proverbial hens' teeth; so costly, labour intensive, manufacture is the only solution. Just try walking into your local dealer and ask for a set of second oversize pistons and rings for a 750 Super Sport.

# N D



Dave has had to rebuild professionally or restore 44 MVs to be able to afford four roadgoing MVs and the racer on test. As a racing bike it's about as far removed from being just another rich man's toy as Dave is to being liable for Super Tax. You could say that

he's had to get his hands mucky once or twice. As a result of all this stripping and rebuilding Dave is probably the world's leading expert, the two Italians excepted, on MV Fours.

The main story started a couple of years ago when Dave and his son decided to go

racing. The engine that appears in the racing bike was used to power an outfit. After much hassle with the Classic Racing Club over eligibility, the superbly prepared outfit started to win races, first with Dave driving and then with his lad at the helm. After Mark had

**Top left: Noisy even standing still. Main: The MV was rock steady all the way round Gerrards. Inset: What more d'you need? Bare bones motorcycling.**

notched up 20 wins in 18 months they both decided that they'd proved the MV's

*the skin  
to be  
seen in*

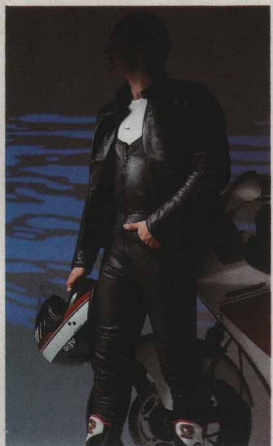


▲THE MESSAGE

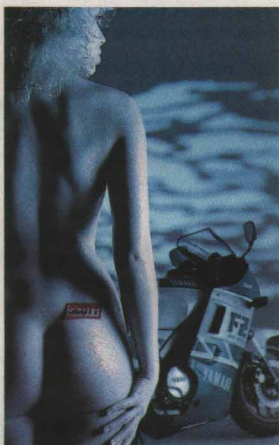
▲THE RACER



▲THE BERTOLINI  
THE POSTER ▼



▲THE SALOPETTES  
THE DAYTONA ▼



J A C K E T S □ S U I T S □ J E A N S □ B Y

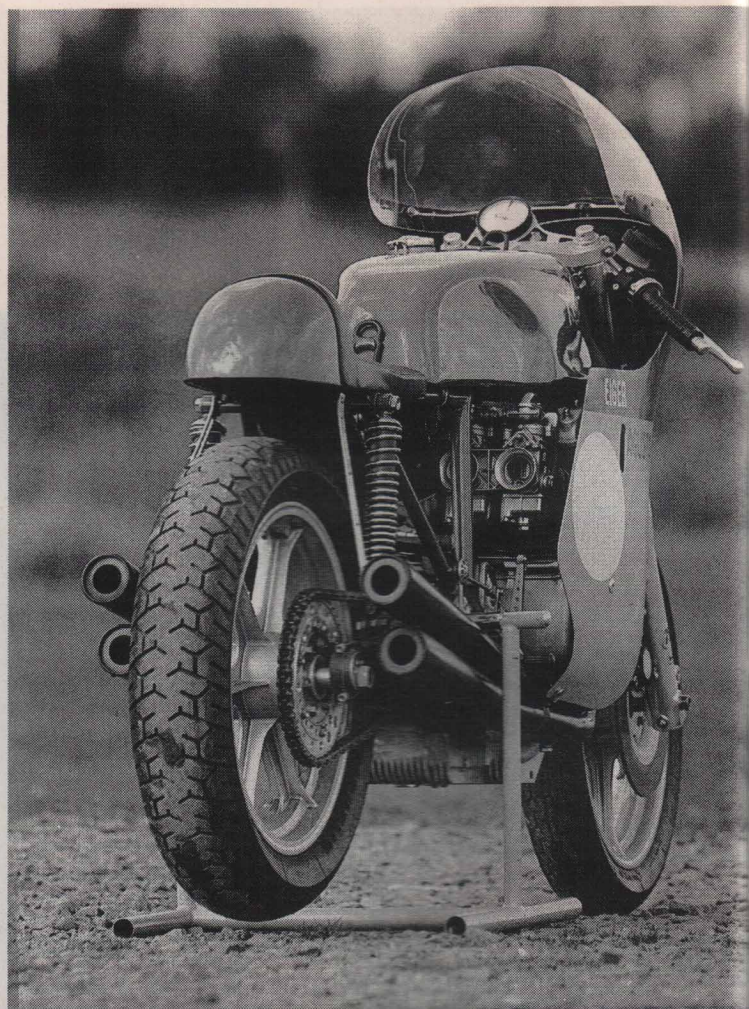
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**As far as the rider's concerned, more decibels are produced by induction. The monster sump holds a gallon of oil.**

reliability to the doubting Thomases who told them: "The clutch won't cope and the motor'll be too unreliable." Time to build a solo.

This is the bike they built. The limited budget available meant a new engine was out of the question, so out came the engine from the outfit. Magni provided one of his chrome moly race frames, with box section swing arm, and the rest of the bike was styled to imitate the bike that Ago should have ridden at the 1973 Imola 200 race — had he not been AWOL indulging in fast women; typical Italian.

The standard of finish and detailing on the racer is not only period but pedantically executed as well. The left hand frame rail is QD to ease engine removal because in the tight confines of the Magni frame valve adjustment is impossible.

The gear linkage is a masterpiece of lateral thinking and sound engineering with a plethora of rose joints and 90 degree angles to provide the right hand gear change (left standard) with a positive and totally slop free action. More time went into the gear lever alone than most people would spend building an engine.

So bearing in mind that Dave and Mark had to rebuild 44 MVs to own this one and put

many thousands of man hours into its construction, I was a little nervous before my excursion round a very busy Mallory Park. Considering that the owner of a similar machine had turned down, quite recently, an offer of £32,000 only made matters worse.

Two blips of the throttle to allow the carbs to pump neat four star into the inlet tracts, on with the ignition switch and a hefty push in first gear was all it



**One man and his Baby. This is a fifth of Dave's MV collection.**

PERFORMANCE BIKES

took to crack the MV into life. What a noise. The four, long, tapering megaphones' bark and the harmony of induction roar from the bank of four 30mm Dell'Ortos cut through the paddock air like a blast from the past. Men old enough to remember the unique melody of racing MVs suddenly stopped what they were doing only to go misty eyed with nostalgia as they began to remember the titanic clashes between Agostini and John Cooper at that very same circuit some twenty years previously.

I began to understand Dave's infatuation with the breed. It attacks every one of the five senses with all the subtlety of a 25lb sledgehammer. Those too young to have remembered MVs in their heyday (me included) were gobsmacked by the bikes presence. There is really nothing like the noise of all those gears, needle rollers, plain rollers and ball bearings slowly reaching working temperature combined with all that sweet exhaust note. Music.

It only took a couple of laps before I felt at home with he MV's impeccable steering. The long stretch over the alloy tank to the steeply angled clip-ons encourage a more tidy riding position than is the norm today. Only the very slightest pressure is needed at any speed to coax, and that's precisely all you do, it into a corner. Once committed to the corner it hugs its line with devotion until commanded to do otherwise. All it takes to change line is varying amounts of upper body movement — but so slight that a spectator probably wouldn't even notice it.

I was enjoying the long sweeping right of Gerrards. A blip of the throttle and a careful but positive downchange on the entry, tuck behind the screen,

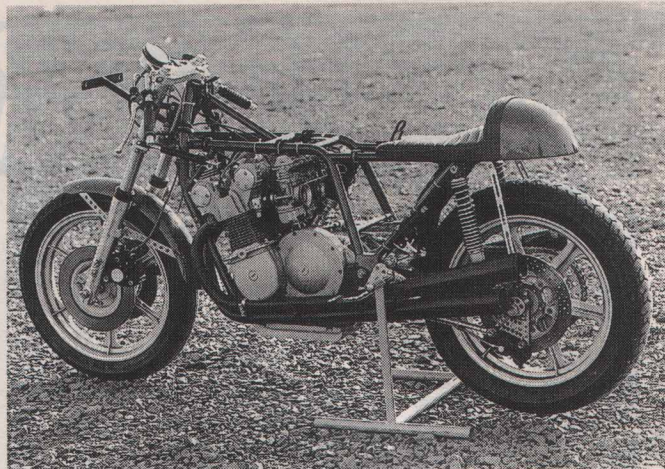
grip the tank with your elbows and power round, just catching top gear on the bumpy exit. Its stability, compared with some bikes twenty years younger, was incredible.

Although I had an owner-imposed rev ceiling of 7,500rpm there was enough power available to disgrace a good number of bikes out on the track. Pulling out of the hairpin in second gear, there was no need for frantic clutch slipping or frenetic gear swapping, just wind it on all the way to the Bus Stop, letting the perfect carburation do its trick. This kind of flexibility, doing away with the need to change gear all the time, is all it will take to win races on the magnificent MV.

The engine's performance was near enough identical to a few 750 Slingshots that were out at the same time, yet with the bottom end and mid range of an 1100. If you find that a little hard to swallow don't forget that the bike only weighs 360lbs with two gallons of fuel on board and it produces an estimated 90bhp at the gearbox. Impressed? I was.

If Dave can find somebody to assist his racing exploits financially this season he hopes to be able to enter both the Norman Hyde Thunderbike series and the Forgotten Era class. The fact is that if he doesn't find some backing you can be damned sure that he'll have a bloody good go anyway, money or no money.

Dave's tight racing budget is the reason for the bike's biggest shortfalls. The suspension, brakes, wheels and tyres were chosen because they would satisfy the regulations of both classes. I don't know how old the rear Hagon units were but the damping failed completely after only a handful of laps with



The MV stripped naked. Note venerable Italian sand castings and Scintilla magneto nestling behind the carbs.

disastrous effects on the handling. The tyres are Michelin Radials, not Hi Sport, and although they should last for a few seasons of racing they proved to be the limiting cornering factor. Apparently Metzeler have donated some super sticky Comp Ks but they have yet to be fitted.

Ideally for the Norman Hyde series the bike should be fitted with slicks, four pot calipers, floating discs and remote reservoir shocks. The only problem here is that when you run slicks you need spare wheels with intermediates and wets. Hello overdraft.

The brakes on the front are Magni plasma sprayed aluminium alloy rotors with Brembo calipers. The theory behind the alloy discs is that they expand when hot to give a very progressive feel the longer they are held on. In theory this is fine; in practice they just don't work, especially at Mallory where braking is intense but only for a short periods of time. Incidentally, the rear wheel, disc and caliper bracket weigh just over 40lbs,

so theoretically there is still more weight to come off it.

My very gentle handful of laps was enough to convince me that Dave is onto something. It would be quite a spectacle, auditory and visual, to see an MV racing in anger on British tracks this season. His reason for building it wasn't to clean up left right and centre but purely his undying love for MV Agusta. "We just want to race MVs". Beware those that stand in his way because, one way or another, he'll do it.

For those wishing to sponsor the most eye catching bike in the world give Dave or Mark a ring, they need all the help they can get. Also, if you own a bike that is so rare that parts are unobtainable, yet you need a left hand, corkscrew threaded, anti vibratory, whatchamacallit, thingummy doo dar in order to get the thing rolling don't hesitate to contact Eiger Engineering (0543 377871), his immaculate and very one-off MV racer is the best advert for an engineering company that I can think of.

## TEST SPECIFICATION

### MV AGUSTA 750

Price ..... £ a bit on the pricey side  
Warranty ..... ran out some time ago  
Importer ..... null and void

### Engine

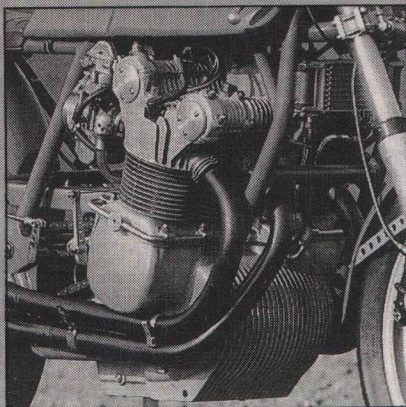
Type ..... inline air cooled four stroke  
four, eight valves  
Bore x stroke ..... 69 x 56mm  
Displacement ..... 837cc  
Compression ratio ..... 10.9:1  
Fuel system ..... 4 x 30mm Dell'Orto pumpers  
Ignition ..... Scintilla Magneto  
Valve sizes ..... inlet 32mm; exhaust 29mm  
Valve timing ..... inlet; 65deg — 85 deg  
exhaust; 85deg — 50deg  
Oil capacity ..... eight pints

### Transmission

Magni chain drive conversion  
Front brake ..... dual plasma sprayed  
alloy discs with Brembo calipers  
Rear brake ..... standard MV  
Tyres ..... Michelin Radial, soon to  
be Metzeler  
Front suspension ..... Forcella Italia 38mm Teles

### Performance

Maximum speed . 140+  
SS<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>mile.....high twelves (est)  
Fuel consumption  
best.....not bad  
worst.....grim  
average.....so, so



Rear suspension ..... Hagon gas shocks  
Trail/caster ..... n/a

### Dimensions

Wheelbase ..... quite short  
Overall length ..... a bit longer  
Overall width ..... fairly narrow  
Seat height ..... low enough for shortarse  
Forsyth to get both feet on the floor  
Dry weight ..... an incredible 362lbs  
(standard 518lbs)

### Tester's verdict

Good points ..... the noise, the looks, the feel,  
history, the standard of preparation,  
the performance, the steering and  
the badge on the tank  
Bad points ..... the front brakes, the rear suspension,  
spares availability and the price  
Performance ..... hard to believe the engine  
was first conceived thirty years ago.  
Mindblowing  
Economy ..... what?  
Comfort ..... mediocre  
Handling ..... impressive  
Braking ..... pass me the ISRs  
Value ..... think of the perfect crime, quickly