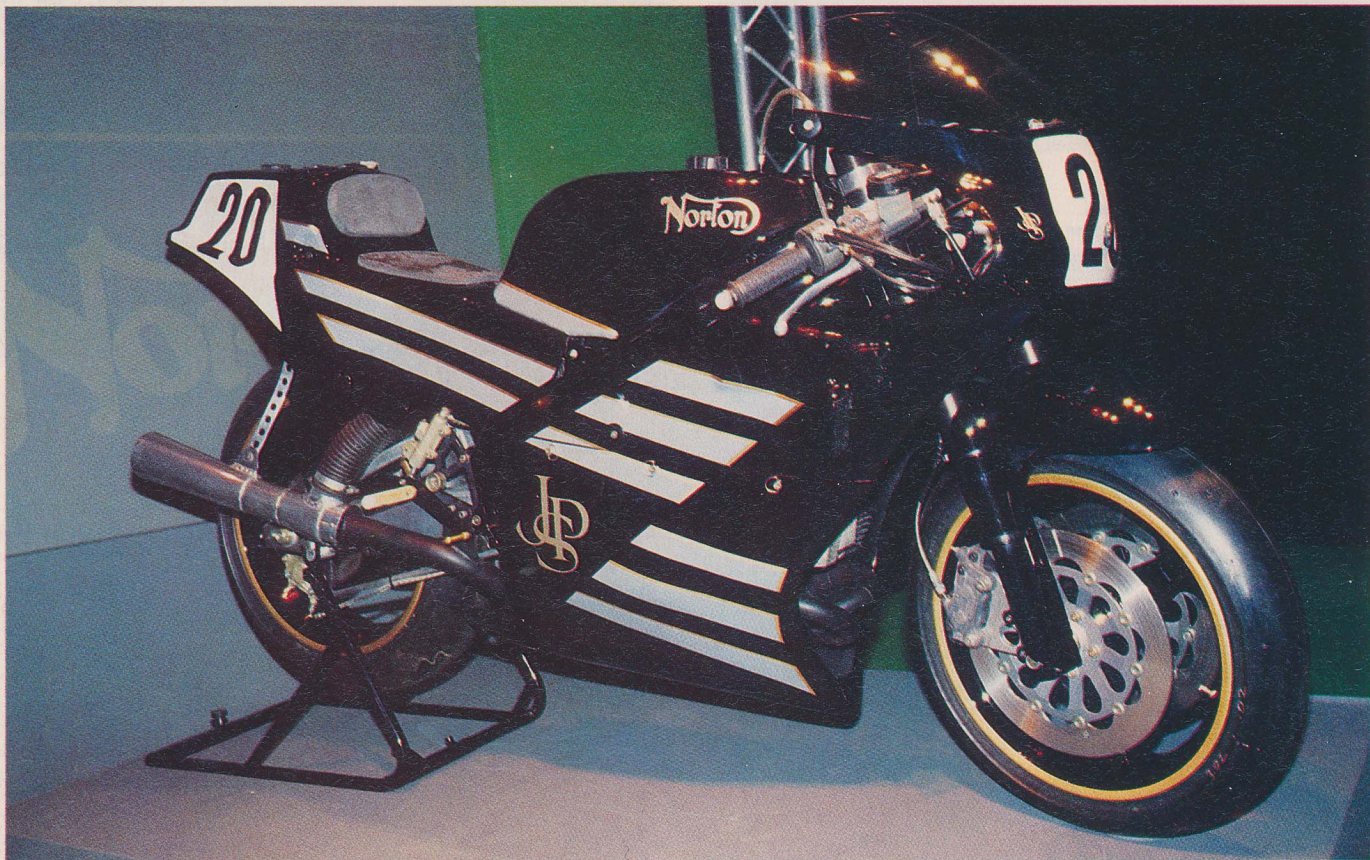


Norton team with John Player



Above; the new JPS Norton racer and its road-going version (below right), with front double disc and simple instrumentation.

AMID much fanfare and genuine emotion, Norton launched their works race team last month backed by some old friends, John Player. The tobacco company sponsored the last Norton factory team in the 1970s but today's bikes will be in the black and gold JPS livery.

So will a very few of Norton's P55 sports bikes launched at

Earls Court last year. The bike will not be available before November and then only 200 are planned for manufacture, some of them in JPS colours.

John Player and Norton presented their new team at London's Intercontinental Hotel near Hyde Park with Murray Walker taking the stage to introduce past Norton hero Geoff Duke and this year's

riders Trevor Nation and Steve Spray.

Engine in the racer and the road bike will be the water-cooled rotary fitted to the Norton Commander bike tested by Brian Tarbox in 'What Bike?' last year. Fuel injection has been talked about but development is still going on.

Sales and promotion manager Dave O'Neill said a price had yet to be decided but something around £10-12,000 seems likely putting the bike firmly in the Honda RC30/Bimota class.

Potential buyers can apply by letter to have their bikes made to order but Norton are not yet accepting deposits. Waiting list for the bike, once an order is confirmed, is likely to be two months.

As for the race team, they will be contesting the World Formula One championship, the British F1 championship, the ACU Supercup (to be televised) and the Easter 'Euro-lantic' match race series.

Trevor Nation will also be aiming to win a TT for Norton, 16 years after Peter Williams won the Formula 750 race on a John Player Norton twin in 1973.

