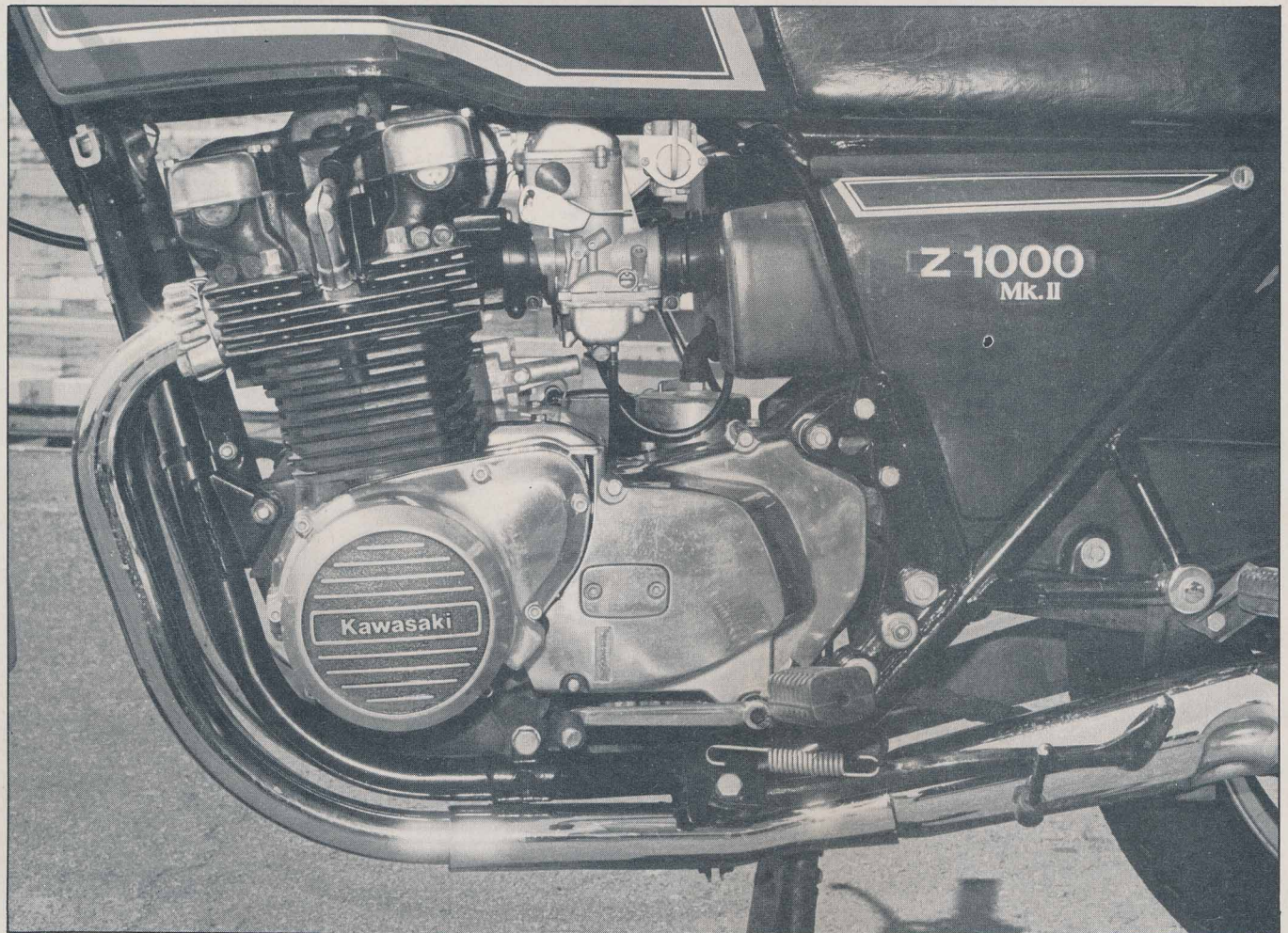


# KAWASAKI Z1000 Mk2 MARK TWO MARK UP



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If you were expecting Kawasaki's Mark 2 version of the bullet-proof Z1000 to be cured of all its ills, rest easy. It's just the same muscle-bound and warty mutha that it always was, says *John Nutting*. Photography by *Tim Leighton-Boyce*.

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One of the most persistent criticisms leveled at Japanese motorcycles is that their models seem to change year by year, knocking the bottom out of second-hand values and increasing the difficulty of obtaining spares from overburdened dealers.

It's an argument you couldn't aim at Kawasaki's Z1000. Despite this year enjoying in its Mark 2 form the significant collection of modifications, the bike still retains most of the character and features, along with a measure of interchangeability with the original 903cc Z1 that was introduced eight years ago in late 1972.

Not only does it keep dealers and riders happy with a machine that is perennially popular but it makes sense for Kawasaki too. They can retain most of the jigs and tools required for manufac-

ture without incurring the heavy costs of retooling when radical changes occur.

It comes as no surprise then to find that many of the changes wrought for the Mark 2 Z1000 are within the original context and follow the same theme of improvement that Kawasaki have been carrying out over the years; widening the engine's flexibility along with softening the suspension for better ride comfort.

This year though the engine gets a power boost which at its maximum amounts to 10bhp, bringing the engine's claimed top power to 93bhp at 8,000rpm. It's achieved by a redesigned exhaust system along with larger 28mm carbs and with lower overall gearing (both now the same as the old Z1) results in even greater arm-wrenching acceleration than

the Z1000A2.

The engine has been strengthened internally to take the power with larger roller main bearings and big ends on the built-up crankshaft and more teeth on the camshaft drive chain to reduce loads on the rollers. The chain also now has a self-adjusting tensioner that appears more foolproof than the one Suzuki use for their four-strokes.

Performance has never been the Kawasaki's weakness but the changes made have brought back the old fire of the beast we knew in the Z1. At Santa Pod, the Mark 2 broke the lights with a time of 12.46 seconds and a terminal of 106.7mph and would easily show 130mph on the clock.

But it could also offer good fuel consumption. One tankful went at 51.6mpg



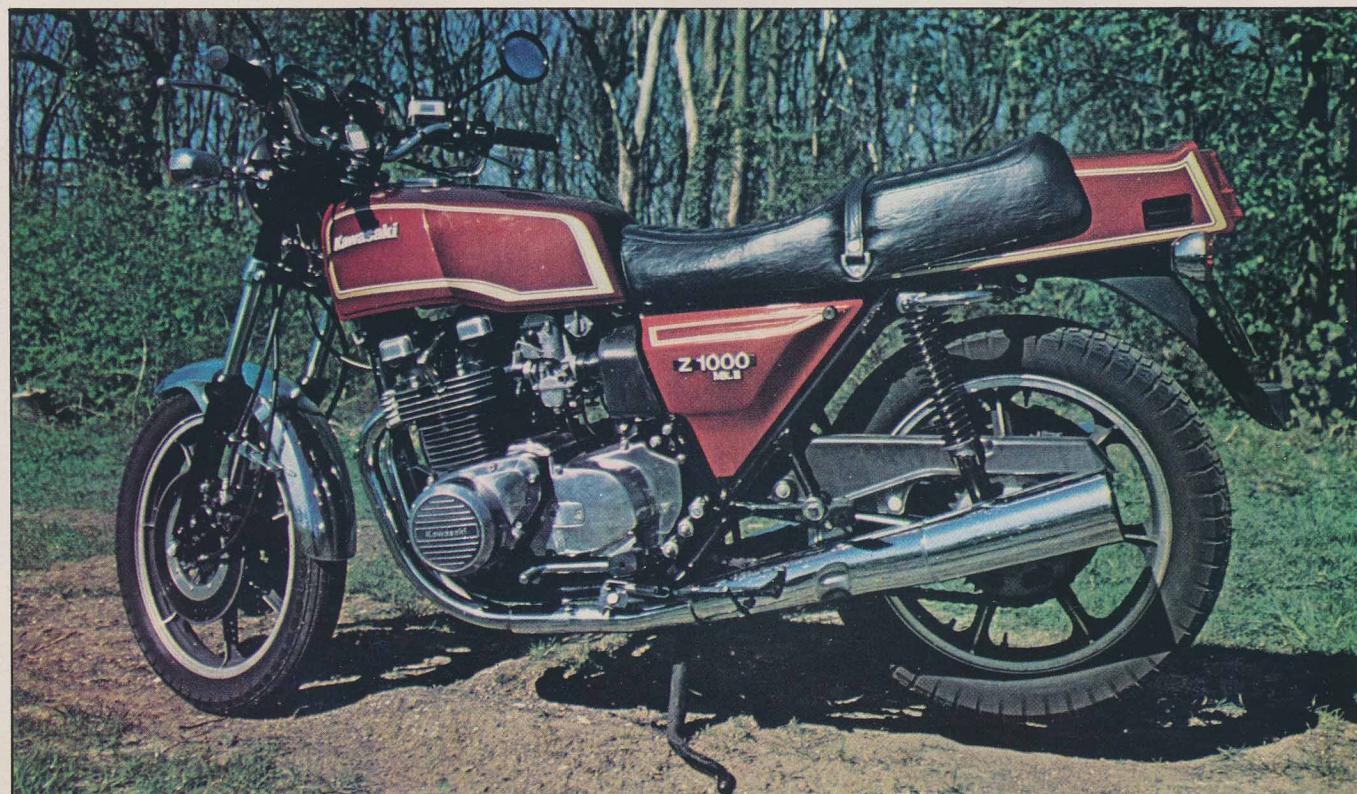
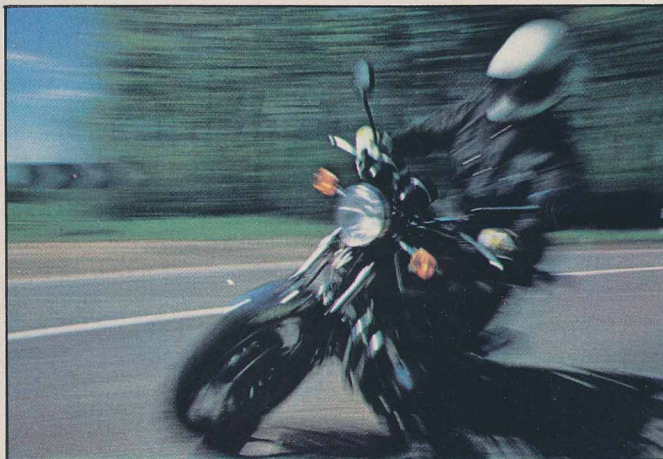
and overall it returned a creditable 45mpg with almost 200 miles possible from the new-style angular 3.9 gallon tank.

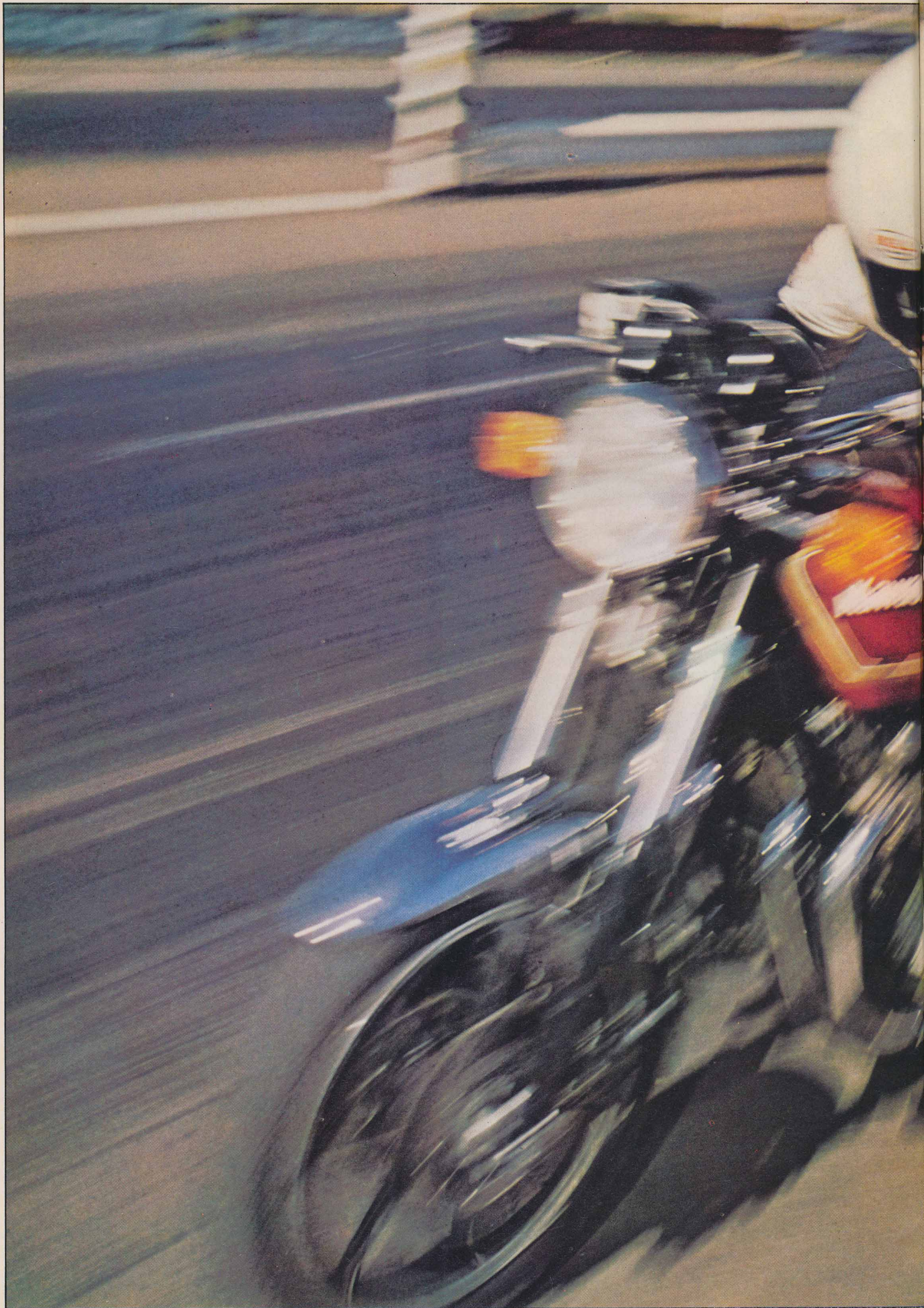
The boost in performance is matched by equal uprating in roadholding and braking. Tyres are now 130mph V-rated Japanese Dunlops in 325V19 and 400V18 sizes mounted on seven-spoke cast alloy wheels. Brakes are Kawasaki's new discs with sintered-alloy pads. Result is that the Z1000 Mark 2 is as sure-footed in the wet or dry

as any two-wheeler on the road.

The handling still takes some getting used to however. The steering geometry is virtually the same as it's always been, 64 degrees of rake and 3½ inches of trail, a set-up that while fine for swinging through traffic snarl-ups still requires more concentration from the rider at high speeds and lacks the tautness found on most other Japanese machines now.

Only chassis changes are in





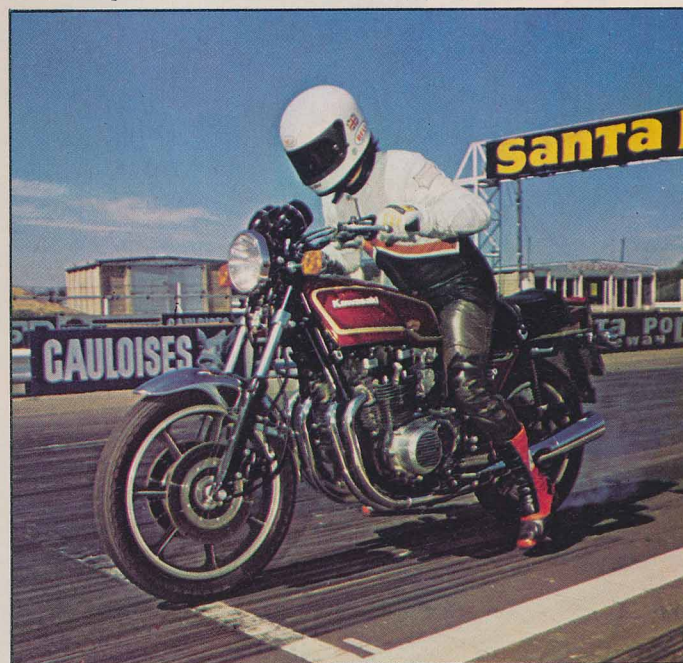


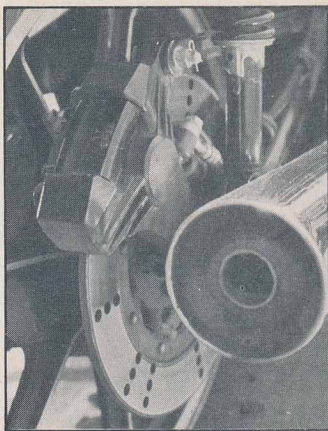
detail with a 10mm shorter swing arm which is now supported on doubled-up needle bearings. Though it's been otherwise suggested that the frame is completely new the only real differences are to the pillion footrest mounts and the rear subframe detailing.

The suspension has changed drastically. Spring rates are lower with heavier preload both front and rear, following a trend that was started by Yamaha some years ago. Rear springs are now 95 pounders instead of

the dual rate 122/175 lb/in rock hard springs used on the A2 and the front fork springs are reduced in rate by a similar amount.

Ridden solo the new springs work well when the bike's being pushed hard with well-controlled damping and minimal pitching. The ride is generally good too except at low speed when stiction in the front fork causes chattering. The bike doesn't appreciate being ridden hard with a passenger however, despite its posted maximum load of 365lbs, as the rear end

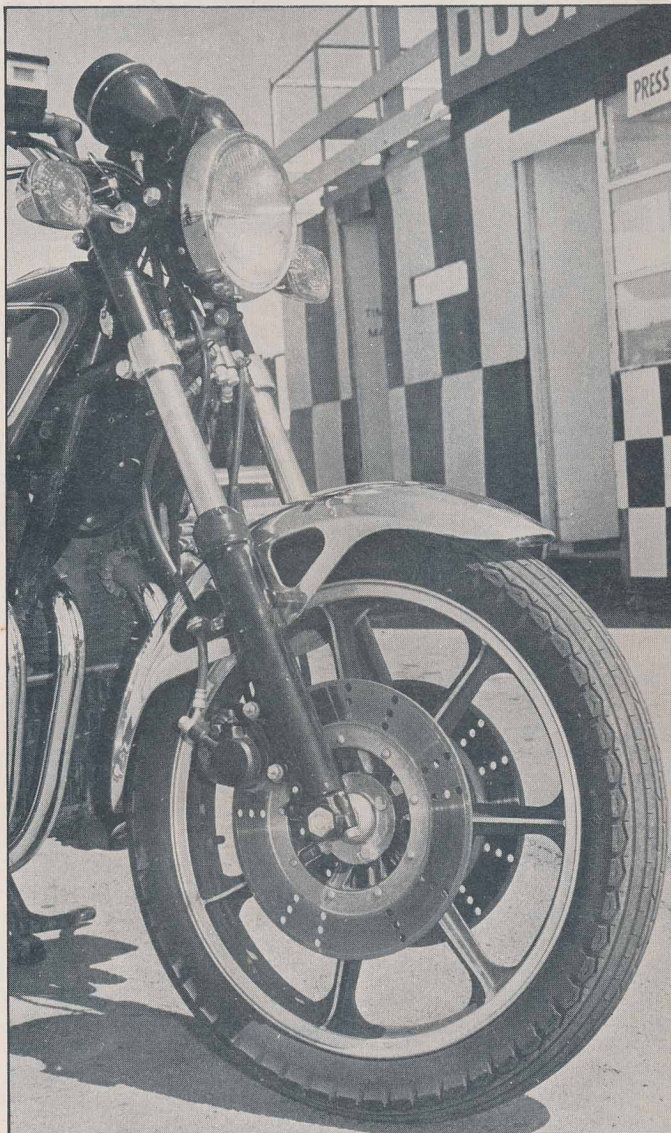




bottoms readily on sharp bumps taken at speed.

The Mark 2 makes a good long distance machine even so, with a properly angled, if wide at 30½ inches, handlebar and a well-upholstered dual seat that gives a good riding position. The seat is very high thanks to the extra padding and at 33 inches from the deck shorter riders will have difficulty at traffic lights with it.

*Kawasakis hot brakes use sintered alloy pads.*

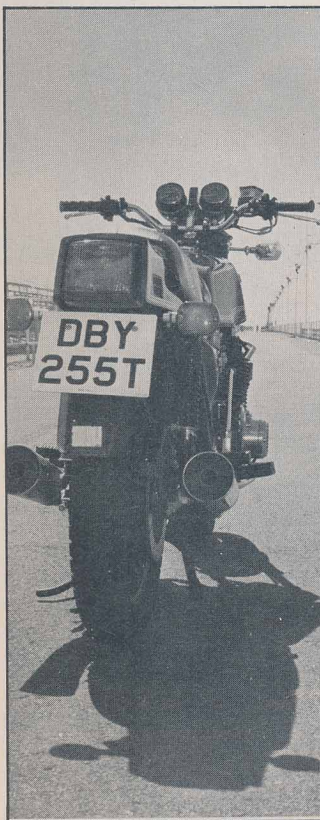


*Despite the new appearance from the use of V-rated tyres, an altered mudguard and black sliders, the geometry remains unchanged; so does the steering behaviour. Good news for parts stockists is that the instrumentation is unchanged – why should it be?*

Without drastic redesign however the Z1000 will not become the refined motor-cycle from Japan that we are now becoming used to. It is a massive machine and feels that way when you sit astride it and try to toe the ground. It's crude too, with unnecessary faults like a rough transmission and heavy gear-change, inordinate reach for the front-brake lever, mirrors that rattle and buzz at speed spoiling the image at anything over 60mph, heavy controls and an annoying flat spot in the carburetion just off idle.

But it always started reliably if fitfully on the button and with simple to use main and prop stands was easy to manhandle.

The appeal of the Z1000 remains its gut-wrenching power, and with more than ever of that the Mark 2 is the best Z yet.



#### KAWASAKI Z1000 Mk 2

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>Price:</b>         | £2,235 inc VAT   |
| <b>Engine:</b>        | Dohc four  |
| <b>Capacity:</b>      | 1,015cc<br>(70x66mm)   |
| <b>Lubrication:</b>   | Wet sump   |
| <b>Comp Ratio:</b>    | 8.7 to 1   |
| <b>Ignition:</b>      | Magnetically-triggered coils.  |
| <b>Carburetion:</b>   | Four 28mm Mikunis  |
| <b>Max Power:</b>     | 93bhp at 8,000rpm  |
| <b>Max Torque:</b>    | 61.4lb-ft at 6,500rpm  |
| <b>Electrics:</b>     | 12v 14ah battery<br>Alternator<br>50/40w head-lamp                     |
| <b>Primary Drive:</b> | Gear   |
| <b>Clutch:</b>        | Wet multiplate   |
| <b>Gearbox:</b>       | Five-speed   |
| <b>Final Drive:</b>   | 630 sealed chain   |
| <b>Mph/1,000rpm:</b>  | 15.4 in top  |
| <b>Fuel Capacity:</b> | 3.9 gallons  |
| <b>Frame:</b>         | Duplex cradle  |
| <b>Suspension:</b>    | Telescopic fork (f)<br>Pivoted fork with 5-pos pre-load adj. (r)       |
| <b>Tyres:</b>         | Dunlop Gold Seal<br>3.25V19 F6 (f)<br>4.00V18 K87(r)<br>11½in disc (r) |
| <b>Brakes:</b>        | Dual 12in disc (f)<br>11½in disc (r)                                   |

#### DIMENSIONS

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Wheelbase:</b>       | 59¾ inches   |
| <b>Seat Height:</b>     | 33 inches    |
| <b>Handlebar Width:</b> | 30½ inches   |
| <b>Grnd Clrnce:</b>     | 6 inches     |
| <b>Rake/Trail:</b>      | 64deg/3.43in |
| <b>Dry Weight:</b>      | 540lbs       |

#### EQUIPMENT

Electric start; mirrors; trip meter; trafficators; lockable steering; seat and fuel cap; hazard warning lamps; tools; headlamp flasher; 160mph speedo; 11,000rpm rev counter; vacuum fuel tap.

#### PERFORMANCE

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Top Speed</b>                | 130mph   |
| <b>Calculated Top speeds in</b> | 123mph   |
| <b>gears at</b>                 | 109mph   |
| <b>3rd:</b>                     | 90mph  |
| <b>max power</b>                | 2nd: 69mph   |
| <b>revs.</b>                    | 1st: 48mph   |
| <b>St. ¼-mile:</b>              | 12.46secs/<br>106.7mph                             |
| <b>0 to 60mph:</b>              | 4.7secs  |
| <b>Fuel Consumption:</b>        | 51.6mpg (best)<br>41.3mpg (worst)<br>45.3mpg (av.) |

#### Speed at ind.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>60mph:</b>      | 55.4mph   |
| <b>Tank Range:</b> | 160 to 200 miles  |
| <b>Importer:</b>   | Kawasaki Motors (UK) Ltd, Deal Ave, Trading Est, Slough, Berks. |

