

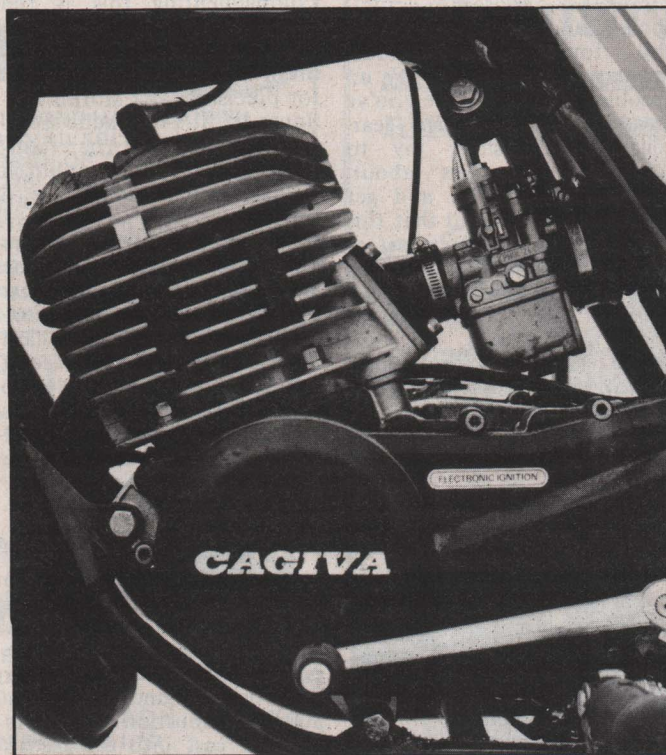
# THE GREAT

It's ironic that just as the Japs are catching up with the Italians in the big-bore stakes, producing machines with handling and charisma to match stunning performance, the wops are finally getting their act together in the tiddler market. For years, market protection from Japanese imports meant that the manufacturers didn't have to try very hard, and it showed up on exported small capacity bikes with peeling paint, rusty chrome and mickey-mouse electrics.

In the bad old days when Cagivas wore drag and camped it up as Harley-Davidsons, the bikes could be broadly described as sound engine and chassis designs ruined by appalling quality of manufacture. The Cagiva SXT 125 could have been made on a different planet from the old bikes, though.

Trail styling and general finish are well up to oriental standards. The *de rigueur* enduro profile means plenty of plastic and a sensible lack of chrome. The only things missing are competition

**Cagiva's all-new 125 trail bike looks like a Suzuki ER and is just as good on the tarmac**



number plates, without which no fashion-conscious High Street scrambles ace would be seen dead...

Like most trail bikes, the SXT is not really intended to depart from the safety of the Pope's Highway, nevertheless the demands of adolescent poseurs are well catered for. There are lots of genuine imitation off-road features, including a side-pull throttle, hexagonal MX grips, folding end masquerading as a chain tensioner on the swing arm.

The switchgear is Japanese Nippon-Denso stuff, falling very well under my stubby little thumb and working faultlessly. There are idiot lights aplenty for the idiots, all communicating vital data like when the motor's about to seize through lack of oil. The two bits of junk are the gizmo that goes beep when the indicators are busy flashing, kidding old ladies that it's a Pelican crossing, and the neat black plastic box projecting out from under one sidepanel. This item has the legend 'Tools' engraved indelibly on its lid and isn't



# PRETENDER



Photography by Colin Schiller

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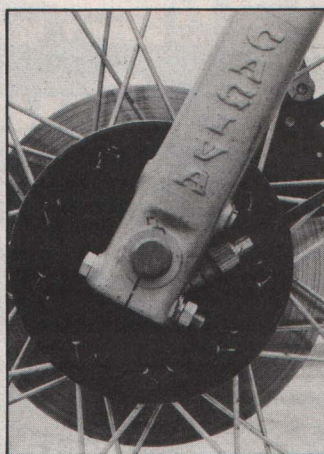
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Vincent & Jerom 44 East Reach Taunton 0823 72378

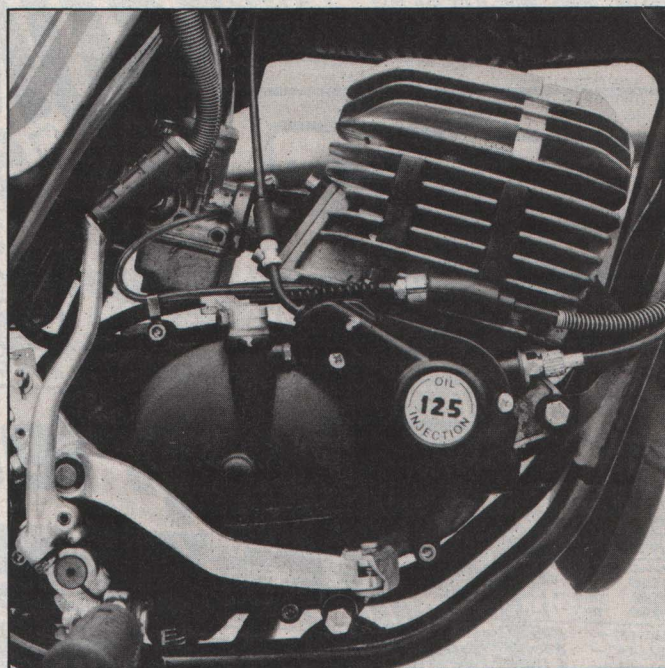
**SURREY**  
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Caterham 48976

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0424 220 923

**YORKSHIRE**  
Speedscene, Blacker Rd. North, Huddersfield. 0484 43337



Above left: The Cagiva's clocks are just like a Suzi's. Above right: Neat touch... straight-pull spokes on the front wheel. Below: New Cagiva motor boasts oil injection, reed-valve induction and there's soon to be a water-cooled version based on the same cases.



lockable. Perhaps if the sub-moronic person who thought up the design had been able to spell 'Steal Me, he'd have written that on it as well.

As much as I might jeer at 'Let Us Pretend' specifications and silly gimmicks, the SXT does the business when it comes to handling. The chassis is tidy, functional and strong. Suspension is conventional fore and aft with a steel box-section swing arm. The Betor front fork has 36mm stanchions and is surprisingly rigid considering its lack of bracing - just as well, because it supports the action of a beefy Brembo disc.

This front anchor is, in image terms, out of place on a trail bike but actually compliments what the Cagiva is good at. The bike's long wheelbase, slowish steering and front-end heaviness make it an excellent road tool and a rotten dirty farmer. It's cornering ability and straight-line surefootedness are far superior to most other spec bikes on tarmac. The firmness of the suspension, once again not suited to off-road party

tricks, gives an excellent ride. The wheel feature straight-pull spikes and are fitted with the new Pirelli MT 22 dual purpose tyres. These give satisfactory grip on dry roads, but, like any block-tread boot, are likely to be outperformed by the brakes in the wet.

The motor is a new, reed-valve number with an oil injection system. Its pedigree is the hairy little water-pumper used in the Cagiva 125cc motocross bikes, but it lacks the cooling system, power pipe and neck-snapping lunacy. The British importer didn't seem to know whether or not the SXT complies with the 12bhp learner limit, but I seriously have my doubts. It thrives on large squirts of go-go juice, bursting into song at about six grand. (The red line is at 7,500rpm.) The bike will howl along with relatively indecent haste, and an indicated 70mph can be achieved without red-lining too drastically. The only negative result of riding on the gears with the motor at full welly

<b>MODEL</b>	Cagiva SXT125
<b>Price inc tax</b>	£770
<b>Warranty</b>	12 mnths parts & labour
<b>Customer Contact</b>	Cagiva (UK) Ltd 31, Factory Road, Hockley, B'ham B18 5LH
<b>ENGINE</b>	
<b>Type</b>	Single cylinder reed valve 2 stroke
<b>Capacity</b>	124cc
<b>Bore/stroke</b>	56mm x 50mm
<b>Comp ratio</b>	12:1
<b>Lubrication</b>	Oil injection
<b>Carburetion</b>	Dell'Orto 24mm
<b>Ignition</b>	Capacitor dischrge
<b>Power (bhp)</b>	na
<b>Torque (lb-ft)</b>	na
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>	
<b>Primary drive</b>	Gear
<b>Clutch</b>	Wet multiplate
<b>Gearbox</b>	Six speed
<b>Final Drive</b>	Chain
<b>Overall ratios</b>	30.8, 19.2, 13.6, 10.9, 9.5, 8.3:1
<b>ELECTRICS</b>	
<b>Power source</b>	Alternator
<b>Battery</b>	12V 5.5Ah
<b>Headlamp</b>	40/45W tungsten
<b>CHASSIS</b>	
<b>Frame</b>	Tubular duplex cradle
<b>Front susp</b>	Telescopic fork
<b>Rear susp</b>	Swing-arm with 5-pos preload adj.
<b>Front brake</b>	Brembo 9.5in disc
<b>Rear brake</b>	6in drum
<b>Front tyre</b>	2.75x21 Pirelli
<b>Rear tyre</b>	3.50x18 Pirelli
<b>CAPACITIES</b>	
<b>Fuel tank</b>	2.09in (9.5 litres)
<b>Oil</b>	1.25 litres
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	
<b>Wheelbase</b>	54in (1370mm)
<b>Seat height</b>	32.5in (825mm)
<b>H-bar width</b>	32in (815mm)
<b>Grnd crnce</b>	9.5in (240mm)
<b>Rake/trail</b>	Na
<b>Dry weight</b>	231 lb (105kg)
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	
	Speedo, tacho, trip, centrestand, sidestand, toolkit, steering lock.

is a fuel consumption figure of 53mpg.

The six speed gearbox doesn't really qualify as a precision instrument, suffering from the curses of sloppiness and false neutrals. The spread of ratios is quite good, although the low gears are neither low enough for mudplugging (which as I've already said, doesn't matter), nor accidental wheelie-popping.

If Italian manufacturers continue to produce small bikes of this quality, then they thoroughly deserve to grab back a slice of the action from Japan. The stumbling blocks, in relation to the Cagiva SXT 125, are both its price, which is high, and the fact that it's not as super-trick as the latest opposition. The 125 market is dominated by the demands of inexperienced consumers attracted, by the sort of frivolous techno-wizardry the SXT noticeably lacks. It's just sad reality that the Cagiva's virtues - its robust nature, impressive handling and adequate performance - won't help it to sell in any great numbers.

Roger Willis