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cycle guide

EXCLUSIVE:
LAVERDA 1000 JOTA EUROPE'S QUICKEST SUPERBIKE

DAYTONA '77: Baker Basks in the Rain Hannah Stocks it to 'Em

What to Know Before Buying a New Bike; How Much to Ask For Your Old One

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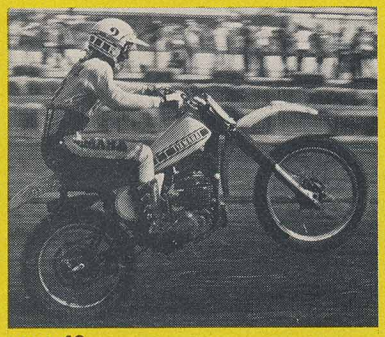

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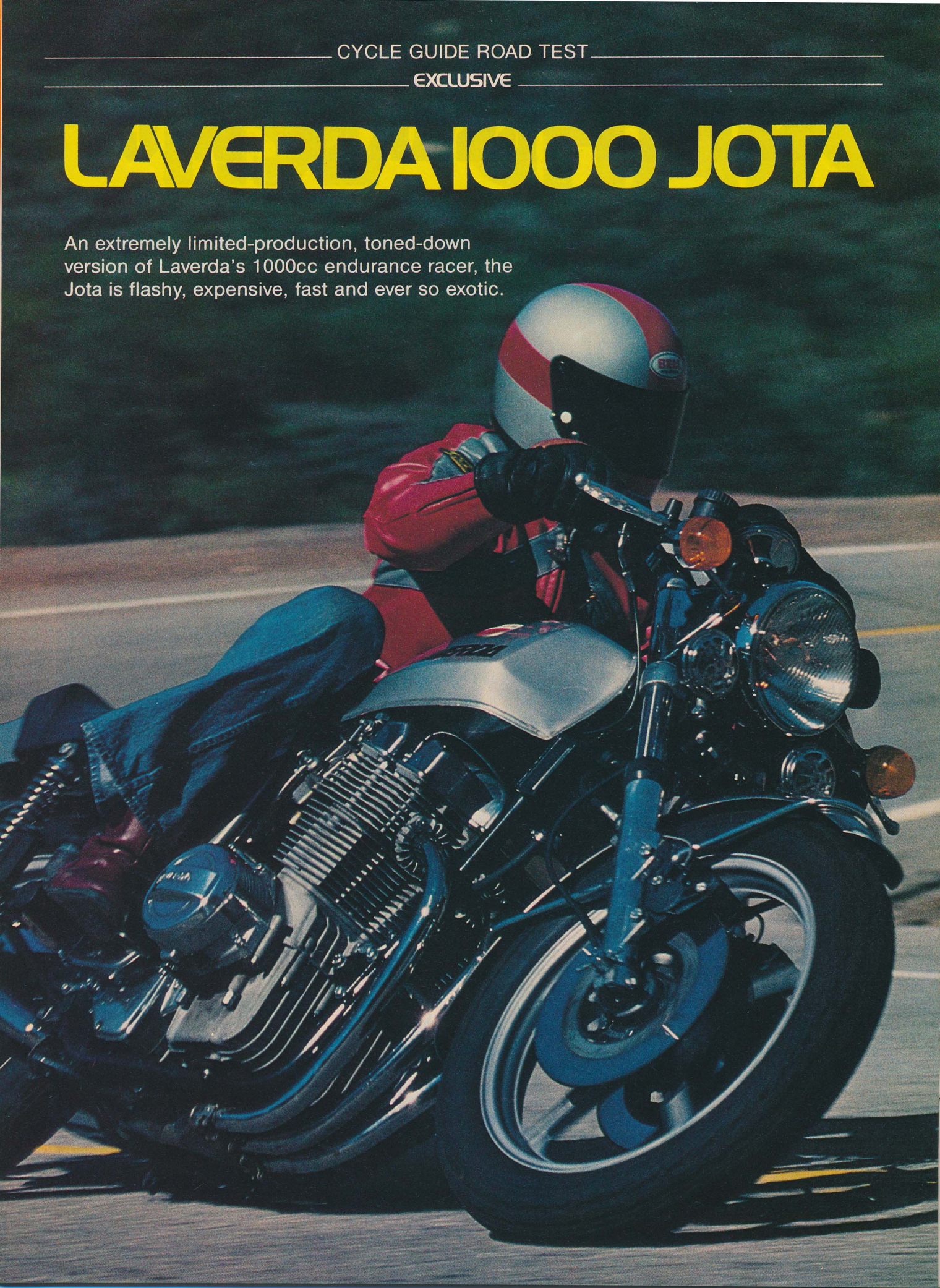
COVER: The exciting, exotic Laverda Jota 1000, a $4500 package of brute superbike performance, legendary Italian handling and suave Continental personality. Photo by Art Friedman.

CYCLE GUIDE ROAD TEST

EXCLUSIVE

LAVERDA 1000 JOTA

An extremely limited-production, toned-down version of Laverda's 1000cc endurance racer, the Jota is flashy, expensive, fast and ever so exotic.



We'll tell you right up front: The new Laverda Jota is everything an Italian motorcycle is supposed to be. It's fast. It's flashy. It's expensive. It's uncompromisingly sporting. And above all, it's exclusive. An American Jota owner is about as likely to meet another Jota owner coming down the street as a tyrannosaurus is to meet a stegosaurus in downtown Des Moines.

Motorcycles are just a sideline for Laverda, whose Breganze, Italy manufacturing facilities are devoted primarily to the production of farm machinery. The firm has been producing small numbers of its 1000cc triple (among other models) for several years, but heavy demand in Europe and the corporate hassles involved in importing to the United States limit the amount of Laverda 1000s that reach America. The Jota, which will be produced in smaller quantities than the standard model Laverda triple, should be even more scarce.

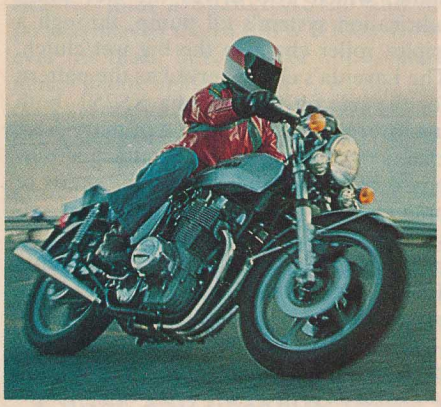
Inspired by Laverda's potent 1000cc endurance racer, the Jota has inherited some of *that* machine's components and personality, but it is basically a high-performance version of the 1000cc street bike—which is a superbike by anybody's standards.

We had read enthusiastic reports heralding the arrival of the Jota in Europe, but we really didn't expect to see one on this side of the Atlantic. When Lance Weil, an American who spent some time roadracing in Europe, told us that his firm, Rickey Racer, was going to be the sole American importer for the Jota and that he would make one available to us for test, we almost fell over ourselves getting to his shop.

THE BIKE: The Jota's appearance and construction indicate Moto Laverda was sculpturing an uncompromising superbike. The bike looks large but lean, powerful yet mature and well-detailed but not cluttered.

Presumably because of the big four-stroke's three-cylinder configuration, the Jota takes its name from a folk dance requiring three participants. The bike's 980.6cc engine has the same stroke (74mm) as Laverda's 750cc twin, but the triple's replaceable cylinder sleeves have smaller bores (75mm instead of 80mm). It may be that this allowed Moto Laverda to employ common tooling for the lower-end pieces of both its big four-strokes.

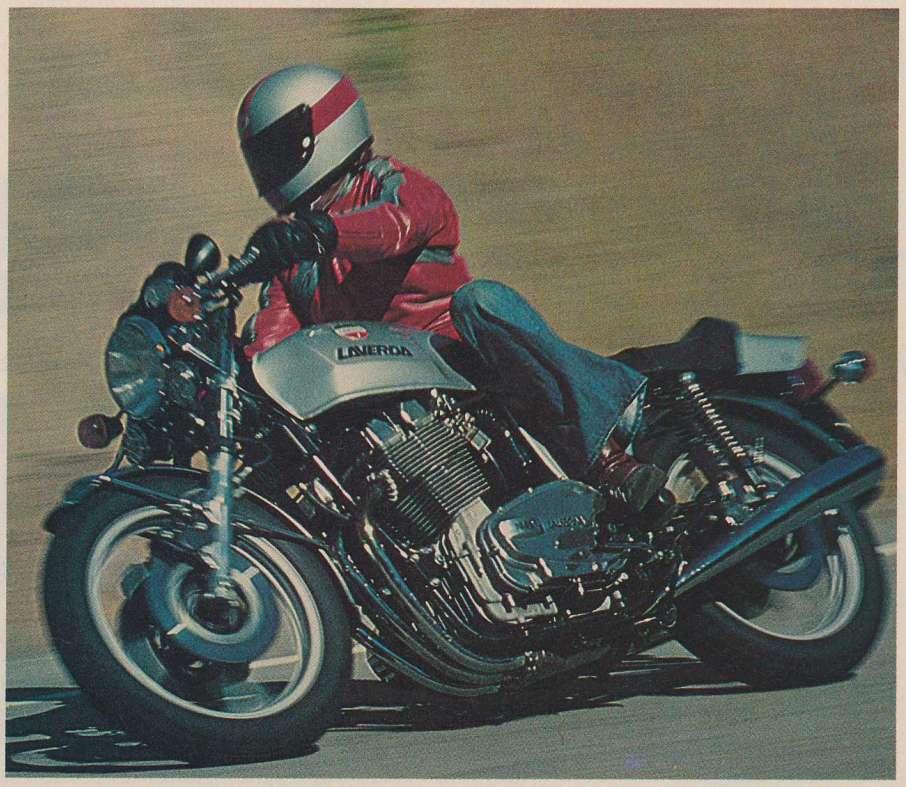
Although the Jota appears (except in color) identical to the standard 1000cc Laverda triple, it has a point and a half more compression (10.5:1 instead of 9:1 on the standard model), a little more lift in its double overhead cams and a slightly less restrictive exhaust system. The valves—34.8mm on the exhaust side and 40.4mm on the intake—are the same size on both of Laverda's 1000cc models, and both use inverted cups mounted atop the valve stems. Small shims, for adjustments, are located under the cups, so it is necessary to remove the camshafts to adjust valve lash. Incidentally, the bushings in which the Laverda's camshafts ride are not part of the cylinder head, so you won't have to sell the head to the junkman when the cam bushings loosen up.



Whether they're in motor-bicycles or wheat harvesters, all of the three-cylinder engines we know of use 120-degree cranks i.e., the crankpins are set 120 degrees apart). Not so the Laverda's. The two outer pistons on the Jota move up and down together and fire alternately, and the center crankpin is set 180 degrees away. This 180-degree layout eliminates the rocking-couple-induced vibration that plagues 120-degree designs, but produces a firing pattern like an inline four with the No. 3 spark plug disconnected. Furthermore, secondary vibrations, which pretty much cancel themselves out in 120-degree triples, are compounded by the 180-degree layout.

The Jota's pressed-together crank uses one-piece rods and rides on five main bearings. Laverda uses a heftier cam chain than other companies, and this chain is driven by a sprocket between the No. 2 and No. 3 cylinders.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ART FRIEDMAN AND SUZI WHITFIELD

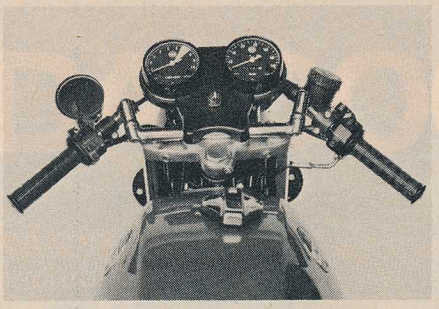


The right end of the crank drives the rotor for the Bosch AC generator and magneto capacitive-discharge ignition. The CDI utilizes two magnetic pickups, one which triggers the coil for the center cylinder and one which triggers the coils for the outer cylinders. Since the magneto is run by the crankshaft, there is a waste spark on each exhaust stroke.

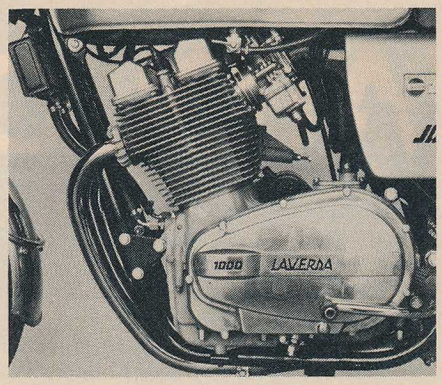
Because of their cost, CDI systems aren't as popular on four-strokes as they are on two-strokes, but they certainly have advantages. The Laverda's system (which has an automatic spark advance) never requires adjustment; and because it is a magneto system, it will fire even if the huge 34-amp-hour battery is near death.

A small amount of charge in the battery *is* required in the Laverda's system, though. To stop the spark in a magneto ignition, the system has to be grounded—which in earlier Laverdas was done with a simple kill button. Unfortunately, this allowed anyone who wanted a Laverda to simply break the fork lock, bump-start the bike and ride off (albeit without lights). A solenoid was incorporated into the ignition systems on later models, so that when the key is turned off, the relaxed solenoid grounds the ignition. When the key is turned on, current from the battery activates the solenoid, which breaks the connection with ground. For this reason, a small amount of current in the battery is necessary to activate the solenoid before the ignition will fire.

The air-fuel mixture which meets the spark in the combustion chamber is supplied via a fiber air cleaner element and three 32mm Dell'Orto slide/needle carbs with accelerator pumps that are operated by a single throttle cable. Spent gases exit through a three-into-one-into-two exhaust system.



Japanese switches, instruments and hand grips are used, but Italian grips would be better.

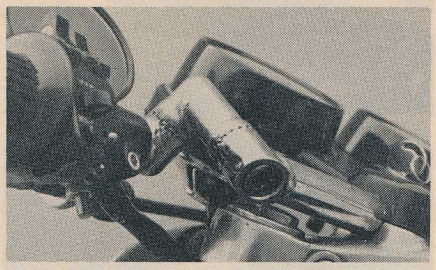


The oil cooler fitted to the Jota is now standard equipment on all Laverda 1000s.

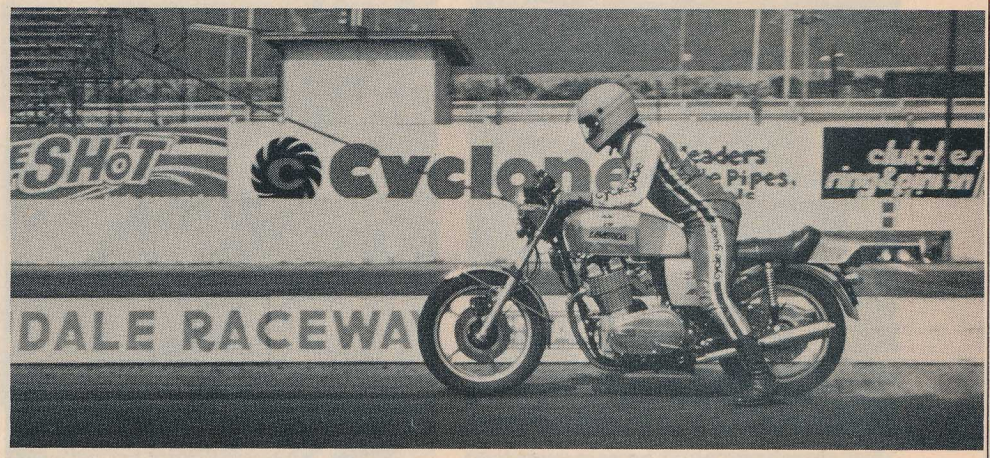
Power passes from the left end of the crank, which also drives the wet sump lubrication system's oil pump, through a triplex roller chain to the big wet clutch. The Laverda's clutch served as the pattern for the one on the Yamaha XS750—both use inverted baskets with the primary drive chains running on sprockets attached outboard of the clutch baskets. The shafts of both clutches (i.e., the transmission mainshafts) are also supported on their outboard ends. In the case of the Laverda 1000, the main shaft rides in a roller bearing pressed into the primary cover.

The Laverda 1000 has a five-speed transmission with a direct-drive top gear, and all the gears have bushings except the countershaft gear, which rides on needle bearings. The gearbox was originally intended for right-foot shifting, but a cross-over linkage has been added to comply with U.S. left-foot shifting regulations. The shift pattern is a standard up-for-up arrangement. Power exits the transmission on the right side and is transported to the rear wheel by a No. 530 chain.

The Jota meets the road with English Dunlop K81 tires, which have become the standard for sporting riders. Later Jotas are expected to come equipped with Pirelli MT18s. The 18-inch, five-spoke cast wheels are made by Laverda, and halted by three disc brakes. All the brakes use Brembo double-action calipers and cast iron discs.



Loosening the Allen bolts and swiveling the bars at the toothed joints is supposed to allow a wide variety of handlebar configurations, but the bulky master cylinder gets in the way when you try to use most of those positions.



The job of keeping the wheels on the pavement was given to an Italian firm: Ceriani. The fork has 38mm tubes, which are a few millimeters bigger than most. The rigidity of the front end is further bolstered by huge, forged aluminum triple clamps. Laverda lists the steering head angle as 29 degrees, but we measured it at 28. In any event, the triple clamps are constructed so that the *fork* angle is steepened to approximately 26.5 degrees. The three-way adjustable Ceriani shocks have adjusting levers cast into the spring preload collars, so you don't have to dig into the toolkit every time you want to change the spring settings.

A frame of rather uninspired design ties all the bike's sophisticated components together. Single-tube-backbone frames are disappearing because they are difficult to make rigid, but Laverda has retained this design and has used what appears to be very heavy-walled tubing for the sake of rigidity. The swingarm rides on needle bearings and tapered roller bearings are used in the steering head.

The Jota has a lot of detail features worth noting: The handlebar switches, ignition lock and instruments are Japanese and the grips are a hard-rubber Suzuki pattern. Two separately-fused circuits insure that not all electrical functions will be lost to a short. The dual horns are loud, but not as loud as the dual Fiamm horns on the Laverda 750 we tested two years ago (and we rate those as the best ever). We like the Jota's high-low beam switch, which includes a European-style passing position that allows you to easily flash the high beam as you approach an intersection at night and thereby increases your chances of being noticed. The fork and seat locks use different keys than the ignition, but the flip-up gas cap has no lock. The seatback, which like the side panels, is plastic, has enough room for a lunch or some other small item and there is additional space in the tool tray. The Laverda toolkit lacks only tire irons, and the owner's manual even includes a parts catalog—although it neglects to tell you what spark plug to use.

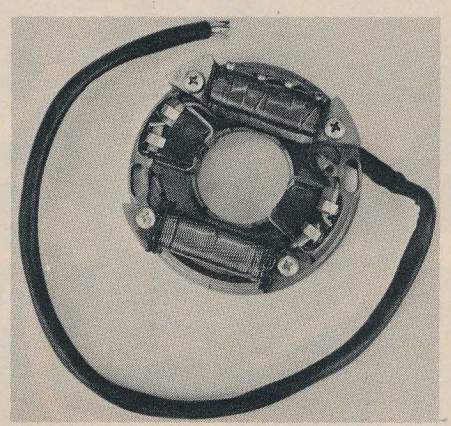
At 508 pounds with the 5.4-gallon gas tank empty, the Laverda 1000 is 29 pounds lighter than a Kawasaki KZ1000, 2 pounds heavier than a Suzuki GS750 and 43 pounds heavier than a BMW R100S. However, its lean, businesslike appearance makes it look lighter than it is. We feel that the Laverda 1000 is one of the most attractively designed street bikes in the world, although the Jota's finish could be improved. We're told that the Jota is painted white at the factory and that its silver coat is put on in England by a distributor who gets and disperses all the Jotas exported from Italy. It appears that the bloke in charge of painting our machine didn't wipe the bike off beforehand. The finish looked cobby and didn't stick very well.

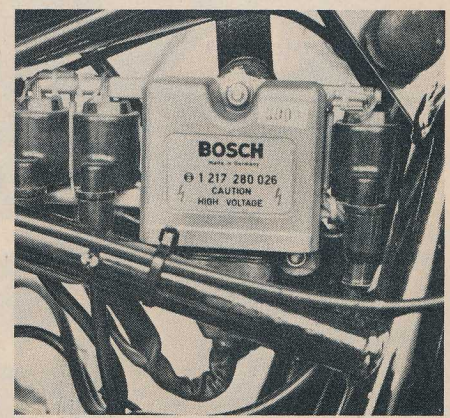
ENGINE AND GEARBOX: Despite a small amount of clutch slip, the Jota ran a quicker, faster standing-start quarter-mile than has any currently-produced street machine we know about. At 12.45 seconds with a terminal speed of 108.8 mph, the Laverda was 0.13 seconds and 1.8 mph quicker than the Kawasaki KZ1000 we tested in January. We know that a very sharp KZ1000 can get down to 12.1 or 12.2 seconds, but we also figure the Jota could run a little quicker if the clutch didn't slip.

On paper, the Jota doesn't look like a Kawasaki-beater. The Laverda's redline is set at 6500 rpm while the big Kaw is redlined at 9000 rpm. And the Laverda has to pull taller gearing than the Kawasaki. Even on our dynamometer, the Jota comes up short of the KZ, showing a maximum of just over 58 rear wheel horsepower at 7000 rpm, while the KZ, which peaks at 8500 rpm, is good for 68 BHP. The horsepower figures for both bikes are similar up to 7000 rpm, where the Laverda drops off and the Kaw continues to rise.

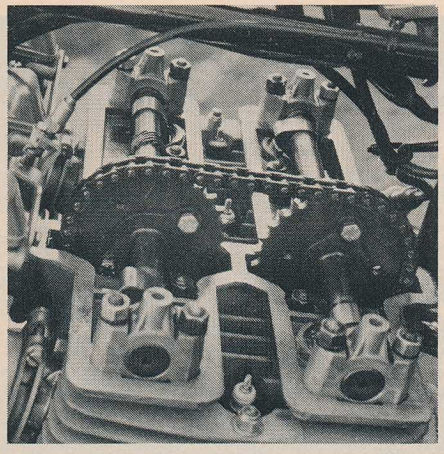
So why did the Laverda embarrass the Kawasaki? One factor is the Laverda's taller gearing: The higher overall first gear ratio kept the Jota from spinning its rear wheel as much as the Kaw, and the closer-ratio spacing allowed the Laverda's engine to stay close to its power peak. Because the Laverda has less frontal area and lower bars, it cuts a smaller hole in the air and has less air resistance than the Kaw. And although the Laverda's Dunlop K81 tires put slightly less rubber on the road when going straight than the Kawasaki's K87s, the K81s are stickier, and this may contribute to the Jota's quickness.

Despite its racing relations, the Jota has

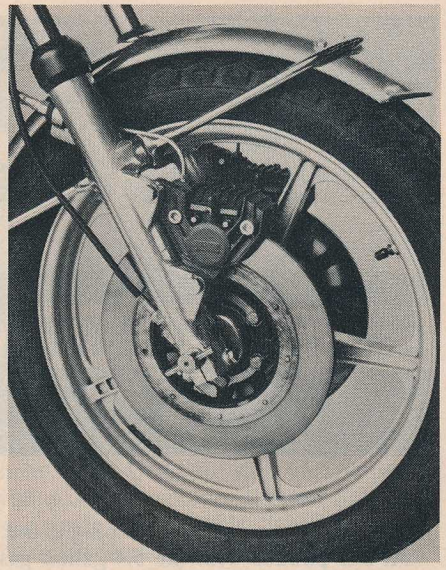




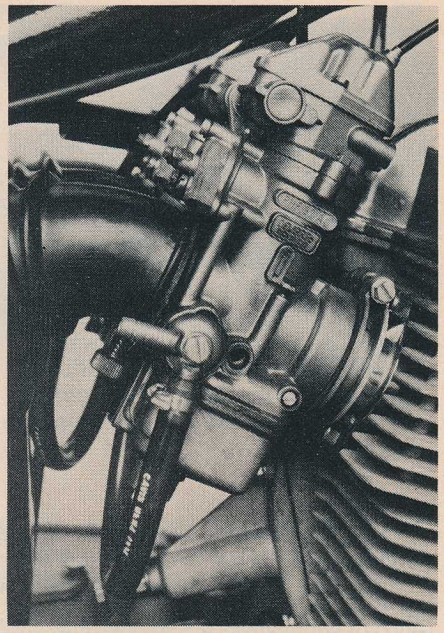
One of the pickups for the magneto CDI (left), triggers spark for the middle cylinder; the other triggers spark for both outer cylinders. The system uses three coils mounted beneath the tank with the black box (right).



The camshafts must be removed to adjust valve lash. The cam bushings are not integral pieces of the head, so worn bushings won't mean it's time for a new cylinder-head.



Although the cast iron used for the brake discs will rust, it helps provide better braking.

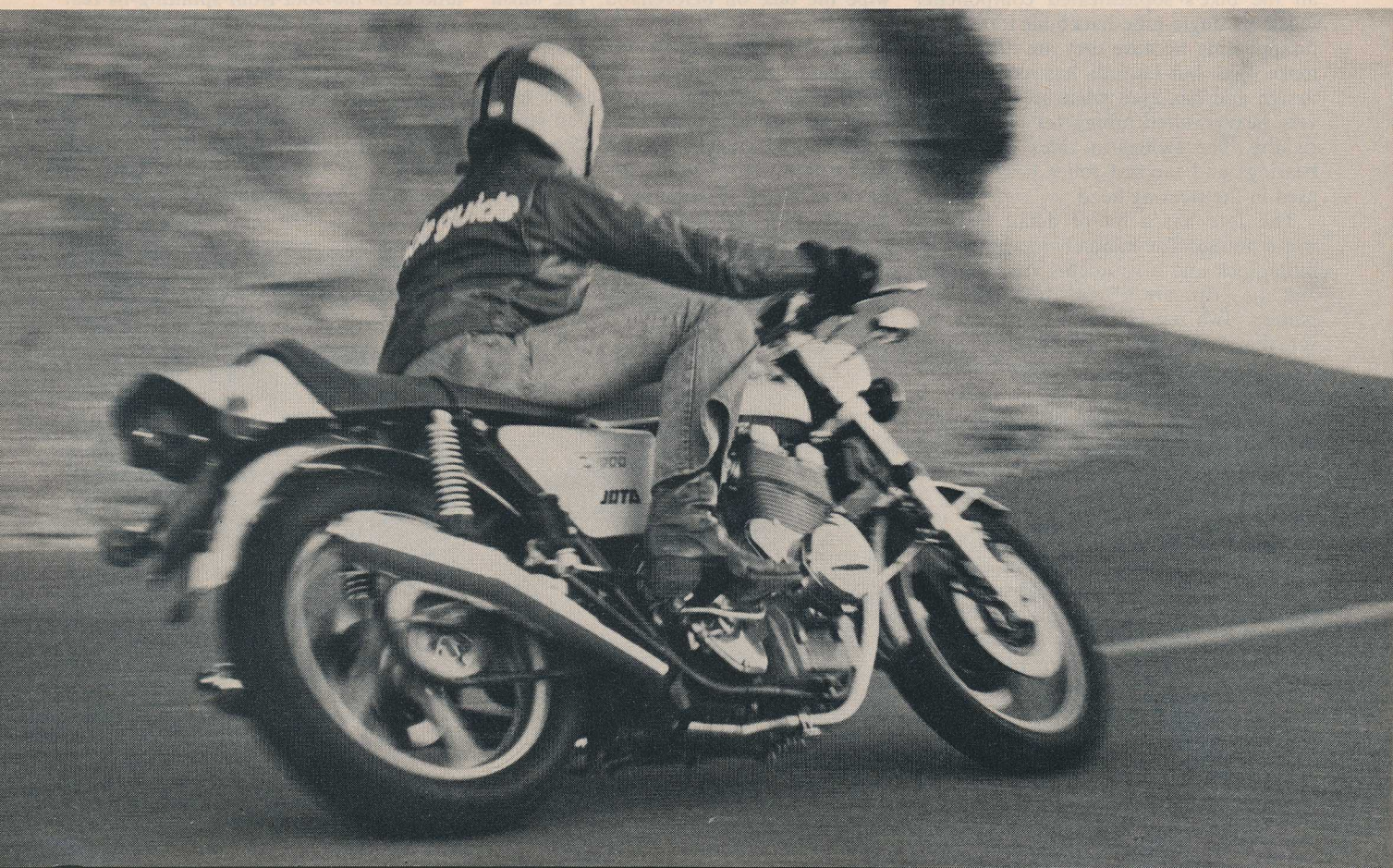


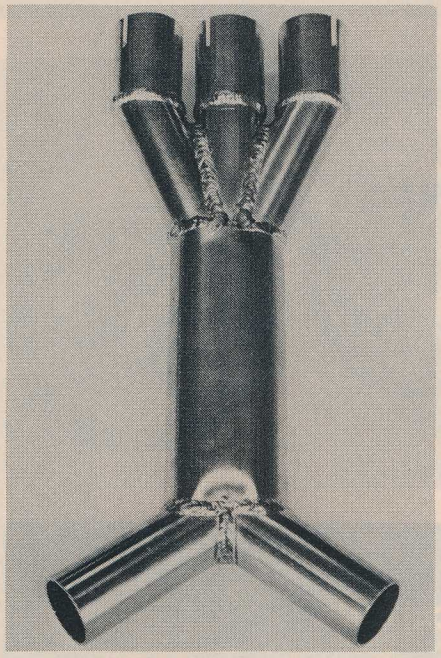
The Dell'Orto carbs use accelerator pumps to improve throttle response.

loads of pleasant, usable low-rpm power, and there is plenty of torque and acceleration from 1500 rpm right up to 7500 rpm. Although the engine will sputter and die if the throttle is yanked open below 3000 rpm, dialing on partial throttle evokes an unusually strong surge of response, even at 1500 rpm. The bike is armed with enormous torque and acceleration at all road speeds and in all gears. In top gear at 60 mph (about 3500 rpm), the Jota will fly past traffic when the throttle is opened.

The Laverda's carbs use plunger-controlled fuel circuits to enrich the mixture for cold starting, and the lever which operates the plungers is located under the left front corner of the gas tank. To start when cold, the "choke" lever must be pulled to its stop and the throttle twisted a couple of times to squirt some gas down the carb throats. Then the bike will start immediately when the electric starter button is pushed. Since there is no kickstarter, the bike must be bump-started if the battery is low, but even then the engine starts easily.

When cold and "choked" the engine came to life with the staggered rhythm (and most of the noise) of an AA/fuel dragster. Once warm the Jota rarely idled





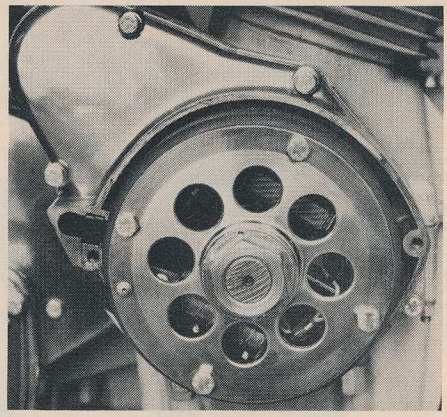
Laverda's three-into-one-into-two exhaust system keeps the exhaust plumbing well out of the way during cornering.

smoothly, and frequently stalled if left idling. But when it did idle it settled into a unique cadence described as sounding like "a four with one plug cap off," "a Honda 750 with one baffle out" and "a Triumph Trident which is eight-stroking on one cylinder." Although we couldn't agree on what the machine sounded like, we all agreed it was loud. The Jota's 96.1-decibel sound level is the loudest of any production street machine we've ever sound-tested, and more than ten decibels above the legal limits in most states.

Because of its large gas tank, the Jota has plenty of range. We averaged 34.8 miles per gallon as a result of continual hard riding. Better gas mileage (perhaps 42 mpg) will result if the bike is used for mild-mannered touring, but we don't believe that sort of use fits the nature of the beast. The Laverda 1000 is most satisfying when ridden quickly.

Unlike most bikes with cross-over shift linkages, the 1000cc triple shifts quite positively, and finding neutral (which has an indicator light) is easy. However, the shift throw is quite long, and until the rider adapts to the long lever travel, he may occasionally miss a shift.

The clutch slipped noticeably during high-rpm, full-throttle shifts when it was cold. Once the slippage had heated up the clutch, most of the slippage disappeared. Our test machine had already been road-raced several times and had been flogged hard during a previous dragstrip session, so the clutch probably had cause to slip. The lever required a strong pull to disengage the clutch, but engagement was progressive and controllable.



A special puller is required to remove the flywheel's outer cover and reach the generator and magneto.

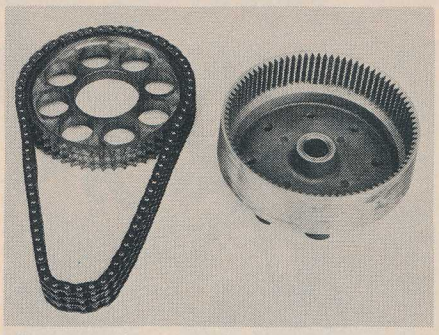
HANDLING: European sports machines, especially those from Italy, are generally credited with almost mystical handling properties. They are frequently deemed to have more sophisticated steering geometry, better suspension control, more rigid chassis design, greater ground clearance, superior traction and less weight, especially in the important places. The Laverda 1000 supports some of these dictums, but it lets the air out of a few as well.

Obviously, at 540 pounds with a full tank of fuel, the Jota is no flyweight. Nor does a vertical triple with double overhead cams keep the engine short or its weight low. But by using a comparatively narrow engine, Laverda can mount the engine a little lower than it could a wider one, solid and stable at medium and moderan inch lower than a Honda CB750F's.

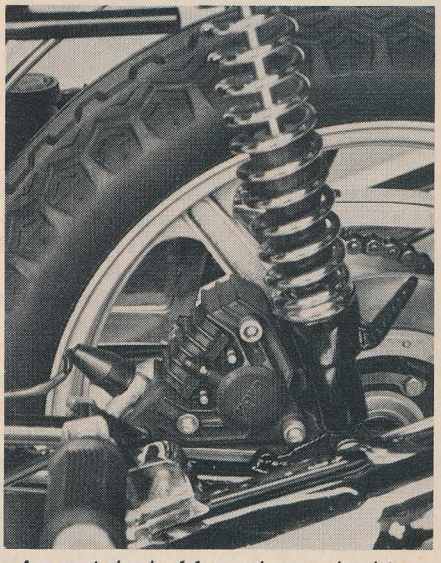
Partially because of the fairly high center of gravity, partially because of the low, narrow bars and partially because the front wheel has 4.53 inches (115mm) of trail, the Laverda's steering feels slow and heavy. At low speeds, the bike feels slightly cumbersome, but as the speed increases the slowness turns into stability and precision. However, even at high speeds the rider must exert a great deal of force on the narrow bars to change direction.

Once a line is picked and the machine is heeled over and turning, the Jota feels as solid and stable at medium and moderately-fast speeds as a parked bus. Diving into a turn and adhering to a tight, accurate line is natural and easy if you have time to plan and execute the turn. However, the slow, heavy steering resists quick changes in direction and makes it hard to change your line suddenly if you encounter an unexpected obstacle.

If the Laverda was shod with the same kind of tires used on Japanese street machines, it probably wouldn't be possible to drag anything in a corner before the tires let go. With the traction of the Dunlop K81s, however, aggressive riders will occasionally grind the centerstand in left-handers, and extremely fast riders will drag the generator cover in right-handers. By most standards, the Laverda has a wealth of cornering clearance.



By mounting the clutch basket "backwards," Laverda was able to keep the case narrow.

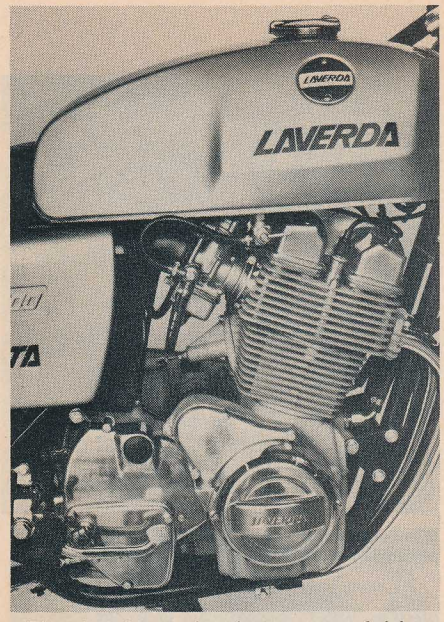


A great deal of force is required to get any stopping power out of the Laverda's rear brake.

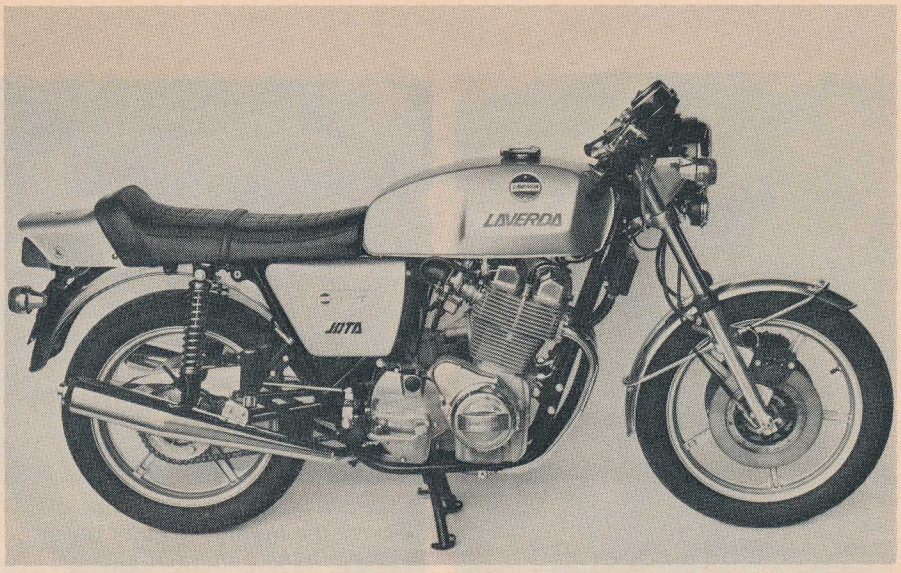
The Jota's taut suspension serves it well during most fast cornering. In medium-speed and moderately-fast turns, the suspension is well-controlled and, combined with the bike's steering characteristics, the suspension delivers stability and precision in bumpy turns as well as flat ones.

In very fast turns—those negotiated at over 80 mph—the handling deteriorates a little. If you stay crouched against the tank and keep the power on, the Laverda will behave just fine in very fast, smooth turns and will wiggle just a smidgen in bumpy bends. However, if you shut off after diving into a turn at these speeds, the bike waggles around considerably and precise steering is impossible. We suspect a lack of rigidity in the frame is the primary culprit.

Despite the suspension's lack of response to small bumps, the Laverda was not jolted off course by them, nor was it blown around by sidewinds. Rain-grooved highway surfaces made the Jota wiggle, but not significantly.



The Jota's engine is torquey, fairly narrow, powerful and loud.



COMFORT AND RIDE: The Jota is fitted with a cleverly-designed set of handlebars which has two sets of toothed joints on each side. These joints will allow the bars' grip portions to be adjusted to a wide variety of positions—high, low, forward or rearward. None of these potential configurations put the grips as high or wide as do the handlebars on most machines sold in this country, but if those configurations could be used, they would approximate most of the styles of bars favored by European and many sporting American riders.

We say "if" because the front brake master cylinder employed on the Jota runs into the bike's instruments or the bends in the bars unless the bars are set in a down-and-forward pattern like the "clubman" bars favored by production-class road-racers and cafe racers. While it may be argued that the crouched-over-the-tank riding position created with the bars set this way is compatible with the Jota's full-bore sporting character, the position isn't comfortable for any length of time unless you are running flat-out down the Autostrada or cutting a few hot laps around Misano.

This handlebar arrangement accents the already-long reach across the Laverda's big tank. This position also puts a lot of pressure on the rider's hands and wrists, and your hands suffer doubly because of the Jota's hard grips. A far more comfortable bar and one with a wider variety of suitable uses would be a BMW-style bar. A higher bar, set slightly rearward would also make the big triple easier to handle at low speeds.

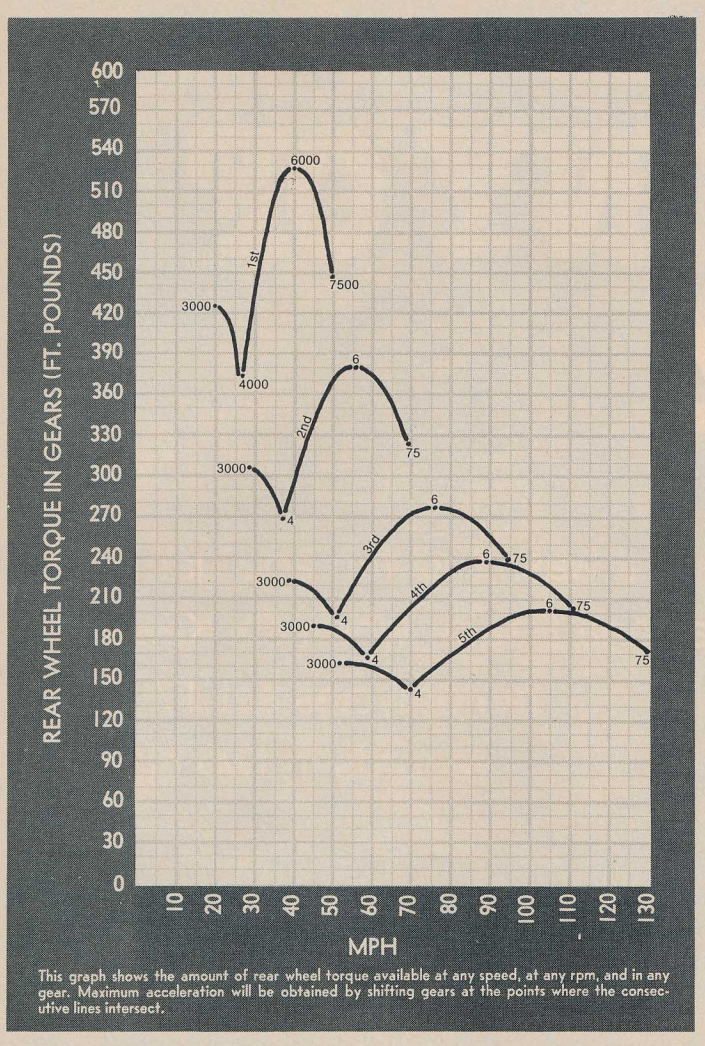
The bars were the only thing that really annoyed us comfort-wise. Although the Laverda's seat is very firm and not particularly wide, it didn't create fanny fatigue until we had been on-board for about two

Continued on page105

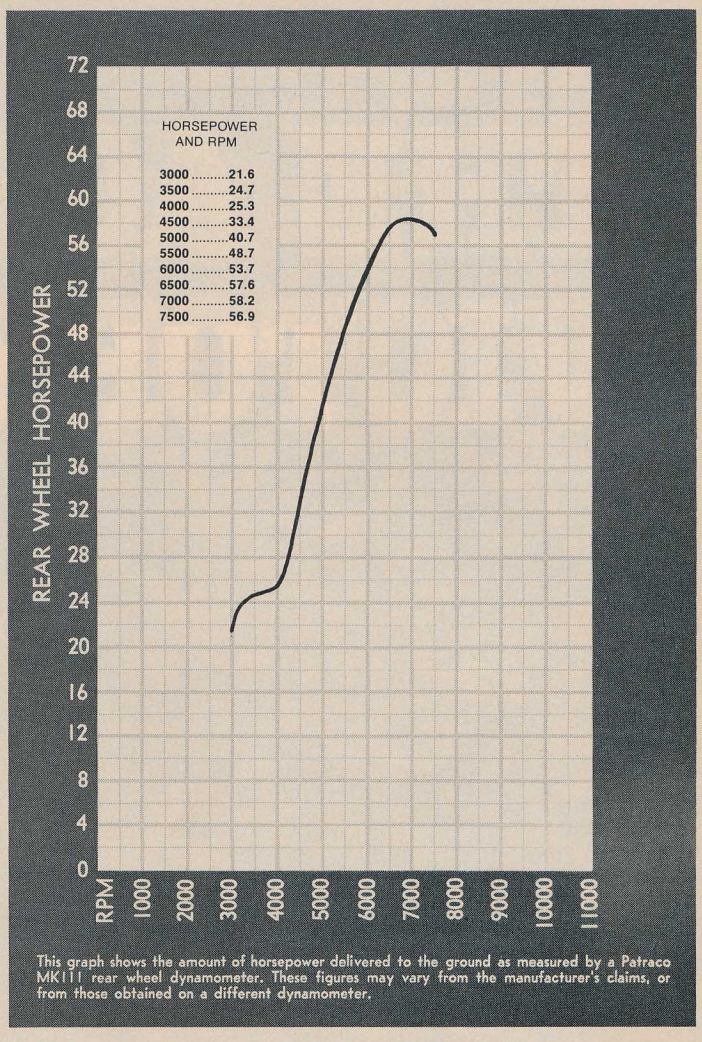
SPECIFICATIONS

Engine type	four-stroke
Cylinder arrangement	vertical parallel triple
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts
Bore and stroke	75mm x 74mm
Displacement	980.6cc
Compression ratio	10.5:1
Ignition	Bosch magneto CDI with two magnetic pick-ups
Charging system	12-volt; AC generator, rectifier, diode
Carburetion	three 32mm Dell'Orto slide/needle, with accelerator pumps
Air filter	washable fiber element
Lubrication	wet sump, 3.2 qt. (3L) sump capacity; oil cooler
Primary drive	three-row chain, 2.04:1 ratio
Clutch	wet, 7 drive plates, 6 driven plates
Starting system	electric only
Transmission	5-speed, left-foot shift
Overall drive ratios	(1) 11.24; (2) 8.09; (3) 5.90; (4) 5.04; (5) 4.29
Transmission sprocket	19-tooth
Rear wheel sprocket	40-tooth
Drive chain	5/8-in. pitch, 3/8-in. width (#530)
Front fork	Ceriani, 5.2-in. (132.1mm) travel
Rear shocks	Ceriani, 3-way adjustable, 4.4-in. (111.8mm) rear wheel travel
Front brake	dual Brembo double-action hydraulic calipers, dual 11-in. (280mm) cast-iron discs
Rear brake	Brembo double-action hydraulic caliper, 11-in. (280mm) cast-iron disc
Frame	tubular mild steel, double front downtubes
Steering head angle	28 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.53 in. (115mm)
Wheelbase	57.2 to 58.2 in. (145.3 to 147.8cm)
Length	86.1 in. (218.7cm)
Weight	508 lbs. (230.4kg)
Weight distribution	47% front, 53% rear
Ground clearance	4.9 in. (124.5mm), at exhaust pipe clamp
Seat height	32.2 in. (817.9mm), unladen
Handlebar width	24.9 in. (632.5mm), adjustable
Handlebar grip height	36.4 in. (924.6mm), adjustable
Footpeg height	13.5 in. (342.9mm)
Instrumentation	speedometer, tachometer, tripmeter resettable to zero
Speedometer error	30 mph indicated, 28 mph actual; 60 mph indicated, NA (see text)
Gas tank	steel, 5.4 gal. (20.5L)
Gas consumption	34.8 mpg (14.8km/L)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.45 sec., 108.8 mph
Stopping distance from 30 mph	29 ft. 4 in. (8.9m)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	132 ft. 6 in. (40.4m)
Sound level per SAE J 331a	96.1 db(A)
Suggested retail price	$4495, East and West Coasts

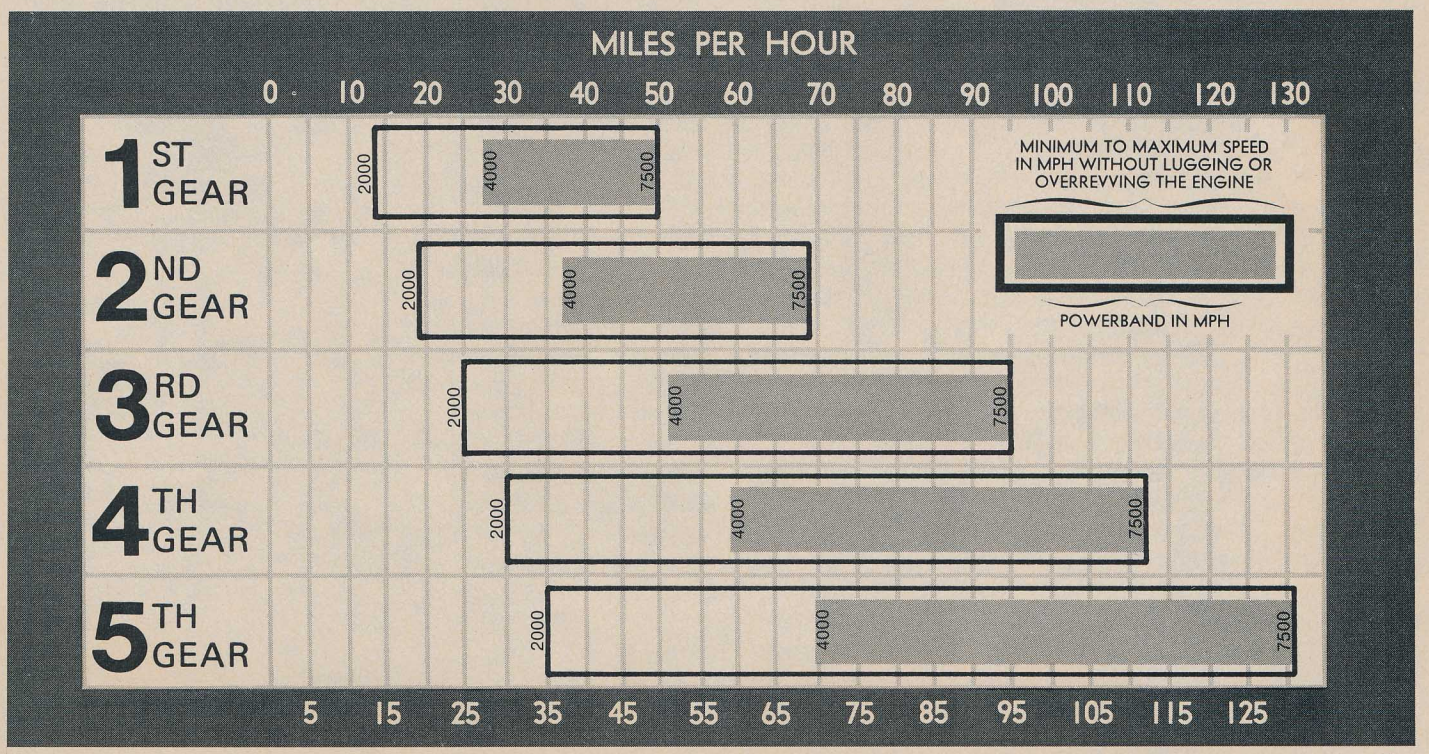
LAVERDA 1000 JOTA



This graph shows the amount of rear wheel torque available at any speed, at any rpm, and in any gear. Maximum acceleration will be obtained by shifting gears at the points where the consecutive lines intersect.



This graph shows the amount of horsepower delivered to the ground as measured by a Patraco MK111 rear wheel dynamometer. These figures may vary from the manufacturer's claims, or from those obtained on a different dynamometer.



LAVERDA

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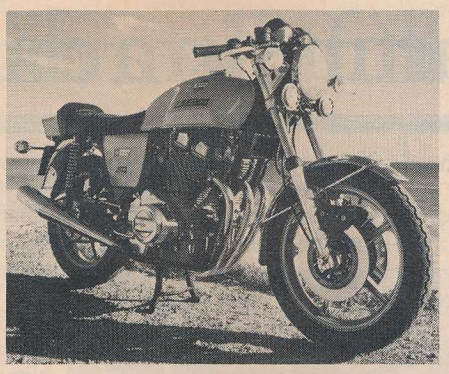

hours. That surprised us because at first, the seat seems unusually hard. The seat will trouble you if you try to take a long tour, but it's not out of place on a sports machine. The saddle is flat and has plenty of room for a passenger.

Vibration is in the same category as the seat: It won't trouble you when you are charging hard along a road that meanders like a cross-eyed drunk, but it will bother you if you try to turn the Laverda into a long-distance Interstate-highway tourer. The Laverda's vibes are worse than the Yamaha XS750's and about equal to—but different than—the Triumph Trident's. The vibration gets to you primarily through the bars, where it will probably put your right hand to sleep. There's less vibration transmitted through the non-folding footpegs, and almost none comes through the seat.

The Jota's stiffly-sprung suspension also reaffirms the machine's sporting character and intent. That tautness is a welcome asset during white-knuckled sprints through the tight-and-swoopies, but the ride will seem too harsh when you're droning down a long straight piece of superslab at 60 mph. The suspension, especially the fork, responds little or not at all to small joints, patches and tar strips. Bigger bumps compress the suspension, but the springing isn't soft enough to absorb all of these jolts either.

BRAKING: Although the use of cast iron in brake discs means they will rust, Laverda was apparently unwilling to sacrifice the outstanding heat dissipation and wear qualities of cast iron for the sake of appearance. And in any event, one solid application of the brakes removes all of the rust on the swept portion of the discs.

The brakes are fade-free and powerful, but they take some getting used to. The front brake requires a strong squeeze before it works, but once you learn to squeeze forcefully there is plenty of whoa-power and the front wheel can be locked whenever you choose. Locking up unexpectedly isn't a problem, but the machine is unusually controllable when the front wheel is locked.

One of the reasons the bike feels so secure when the front wheel is locked is that it takes a whole bunch of pressure to lock the rear wheel or to get much response of any kind from the rear brake. It can be locked, but you nearly have to stand on the pedal.

All of this works out quite well. The front brake's power, the rear wheel gyroscopic effect and the adhesion of the Dunlops come together to produce excellent panic stops. From 60 mph, the Laverda screeched to a stop in 132.5 feet, which places it firmly among the five best large displacement street machines we've tested. The Jota out-stopped *all* the other big machines from 30 mph with a super-short 29 feet, 4 inches.

RELIABILITY DURING TEST: The biggest problem we had with the Jota was the clutch slippage mentioned previously. We also had some smaller problems.

When the odometer was showing about 1950 miles, the speedometer began wavering at higher speeds. Although the speedo was consistent and reasonably accurate at 30 mph (28 mph actual), true speed at an indicated 60 mph varied from 45 to 65 mph.

Vibration loosened the nut on the lower throttle cable adjuster. When the nut worked down the adjuster, we became aware of the problem—because it wasn't possible to open the throttle all the way. Tightening and securing the delinquent nut was simple.

The Jota's rectifier is encased in an epoxy block, and this block is fitted into a metal mount which bolts to the frame. The epoxy block on our machine became detached from the mount, so we repaired it with a dab of silicone cement.

Our only other complaint was with the flip-up gas cap which wept when the tank was full.

CONCLUSION: Can you justify nearly five grand for a motorcycle? To some riders $4500 would be a fair price to pay for a machine as beautiful, charming and distinctive as the Jota—a machine which stands out in a crowd of Japanese look-alikes, a machine with an irrepressible personality. At that price some people will consider the Jota's awesome speed, terrific stopping power, sporting personality and general quality of construction to be no-cost extras.

To others, a $4500 machine which can physically do little more than its $2600 mass-produced Japanese counterpart will never be comprehensible or desirable. It is simply a matter of priorities; for the particular kind of rider who demands something different, the Laverda Jota will be intensely satisfying even if it's just parked in his garage—and addictively exciting when moving.

If you intend to buy a Jota, you'll have to get one from the American importer: Rickey Racer, 444A Monterey Street, Pomona, California 91767 (Phone 714/622-0533). The standard Laverda 1000 is more or less available through any Laverda dealer.