

SUPERBIKE

MOTO GUZZI

850 LE MANS

YOUR
PULL-OUT
POSTER

WHEN Moto Guzzi pulled out of Grand Prix road racing in 1957 it ended a tradition established by the founders of the company, Carlo Guzzi and Giorgio Parodi, who first began building motorcycles in 1921 on the shores of Lake Como at Mandello del Lario.

In their first year of production, during which they built a total of 17 500cc machines, a standard production Moto Guzzi won the coveted Targa Florio road race. This effectively set a pattern for Moto Guzzi, who, similar to many other manufacturers at that time, developed their road machines from lessons they learned on the race tracks.

During their racing history, Moto Guzzi set 22 World Speed Records, won 14 World Road Racing Championships, 55 National Championship titles overseas and claimed the victor's laurels 11 times in the Isle of Man TT races.

The Moto Guzzi factory were constantly developing new ideas and designs to beat the opposition. As early as 1924 they had an overhead four-valve 500cc machine and in 1930 produced a supercharged, transverse four-cylinder 500cc motorcycle.

The first of the highly successful in-line V-twins appeared in 1933 along with a revolutionary, transverse 500cc three-cylinder motorcycle.

Rear springing was also developed by Moto Guzzi on their 1935 250 and 500cc racing bikes. In fact, this Italian factory was at the forefront of development to make their light-weight machines handle well on road and track.

In the late 1940s and early '50s, Moto Guzzi single-cylinder racers could often stay with and then out-brake and out-corner the more powerful and often complex multi-cylinder bikes of their competitors. But realising that more cylinders meant higher revs and increased power for straight line speed, in 1951 the Moto Guzzi factory produced a water-cooled, in-line 500cc four-cylinder.

Finally, in a vain attempt to outgun both Gilera and MV Agusta, the Mandello factory produced the ultimate machine of its day, a water-cooled, V8-cylinder racing 500, which in 1955 was capable of around 165mph!

The motorcycle museum at the Mandello del Lario factory is packed with these exciting, if historic, racing machines and but for the tremendous increase in the cost of Grand Prix racing, and the slump in motorcycle sales at home and abroad, Guzzi may well have proved worthy opponents for the Japanese factory teams who dominated the Grand Prix scene during the following decade.

However, because of the demise of the Italian and British motorcycle in-

dustries during the 1960s, when numerous old-established names went to the wall, the only survivors were those that had a serious rethink about their production policies.

Moto Guzzi were among a minority of Italian motorcycle companies that, because of virtual state ownership, received a vital injection of money to develop new ideas and machines.

The first of these, in 1966, was a 700cc V-twin, shaft-driven model, designated the Moto Guzzi V7. Within five years, the model underwent a number of changes with Special, Sport and GT models being produced.

The basic concept had been well received both at home and abroad and with the first of the over-bored versions appearing as the 850cc V7 GT in 1972, Moto Guzzi were all set to tackle the 'superbike' market.

The 850 California soon appeared to compete with the BMW range on the American market and in 1974 the 850T and 750S models were introduced.

The big breakthrough came in 1975 with the introduction of the integral braking system on all of the big capacity 750 and 850cc bikes. Another step forward in motorcycle design came from Moto Guzzi with the 1,000cc V-twin H-convert automatic transmission motorcycle. And that brings us right up to date with one exception . . . the Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans.

We were among the first of the motor cycle magazines in the UK to actually ride and test this machine at our MIRA test track.

There we found that not only did the machine surpass the majority of its contemporaries over straight line standing quarter-mile figures, but in braking and handling it had far more to offer than most.

If you can imagine covering a standing quarter-mile in 12.9 seconds with a terminal speed of 106.49mph, you're talking in terms of the fastest of sports

cars on our roads.

Braking distances are also shattering, with only 21ft. 5in. being recorded when attempting to stop from 30mph. From 60mph we obtained a figure of 126ft. which set against the average of 160ft-plus, shows just how effective the new integral braking system is when compared with established front and rear disc set-ups.

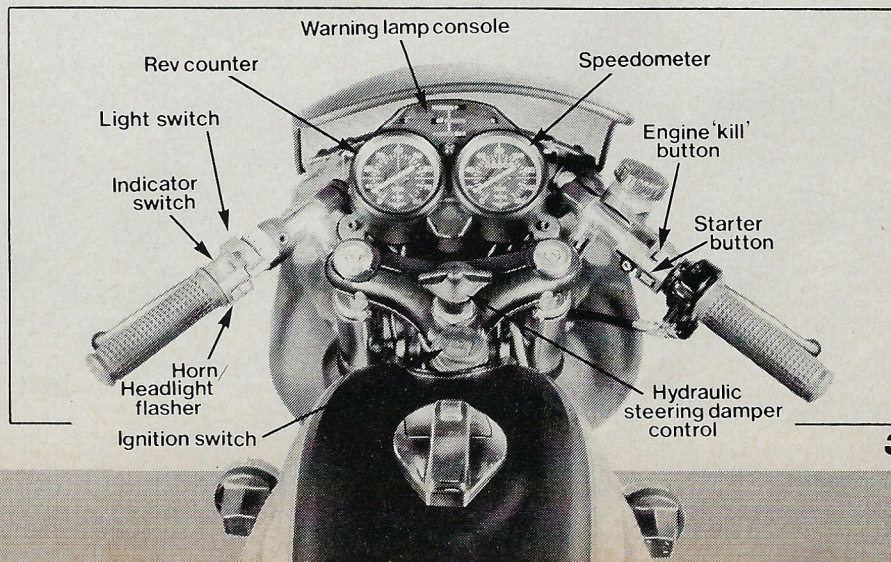
The Le Mans 850 Moto Guzzi is a 'superbike' par excellence. There is no doubt whatsoever that it provides exhilarating performance and only in minor detail, such as feebly mounted pillion footrests and completely inadequate space for a passenger, does it not compare with the BMW R90S.

The loping V-twin, with plenty of gutsy low-down power, the five-speed gearbox and shaft drive . . . all are there. However, against strong headwinds or carrying a pillion passenger, we found that fifth gear was more of an overdrive, and achieved better performances on full throttle in fourth gear than when using fifth in adverse conditions.

However, when you can top the existing 70mph speed limit on our own highways and byways in second gear, then it is obvious that here is a machine longing for the freedom of Continental autobahns and stradas.

Maximum speed, achieved flat on the tank in racing leathers on the high-speed circuit at MIRA, was a creditable 126.99mph, although, as with many bikes we have tested at high speed, there was a tendency to weave in a straight line.

The 850 Le Mans is one terrific lump of motorcycle and attracts attention wherever it may be parked. The cast aluminium wheels, double disc front brake, shaft drive and sporting appearance make it an outstanding example of Italian sports motorcycle design. We hope to bring you a full performance test of this machine in the very near future.



GENERAL

Price: £2,000 inc. VAT.
Finish: Cherry red or silver blue metallic paintwork with matt black contrast panels on fuel tank. Side panels in cherry red or silver blue metallic paint.
Glass-fibre red or metallic blue mudguards.
Chromed fork stanchions with

polished alloy sliders
Matt black exhaust system
Alloy cylinders and heads with polished rocker covers
Polished alloy generator cover
Matt black switchgear including alloy brake and clutch levers
Matt black vinyl seat cover

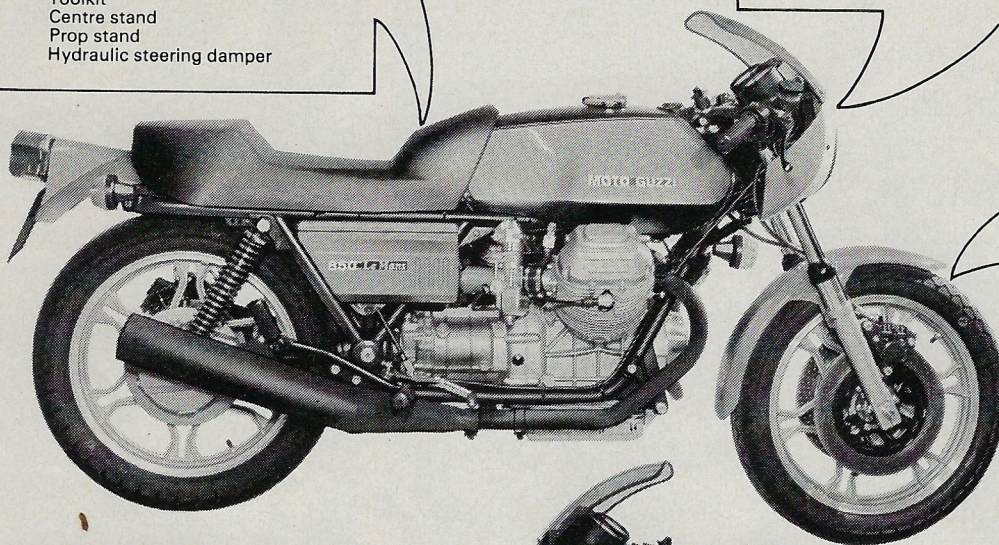
EQUIPMENT

Folding pillion footrests
Solo/sport dual-seat
Underseat tool tray
Twin mirrors
Steering head lock
Toolkit
Centre stand
Prop stand
Hydraulic steering damper

ELECTRICS

12v 32ah battery
Twin-coil ignition system
Bosch 280 watt alternator
Bosch 0.6hp starter motor
12v 35/40W headlamp
12v 21/5W stop/tail lamp
12v 5W parking light
12v 1.2W instrument panel lights
12v 3W speedo/rev counter lights

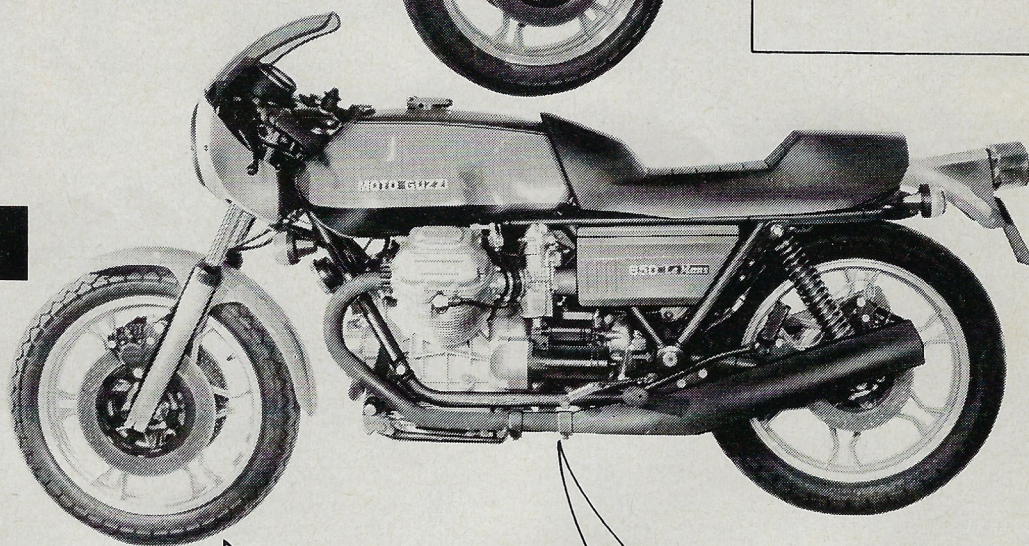
12v 21W direction indicators
12v 3.5W diaphragm horn
Eight 15amp circuit fuses
Main fuse rating, 25amp
Warning lights for oil pressure, hydraulic fluid level
generator, trafficators and headlight main beam



SUSPENSION

Telescopic front forks with alloy sliders and swinging fork rear suspension. Both are hydraulically damped with variable spring settings on the rear legs.
Front fork springs free length, 16 $\frac{3}{16}$ in. 421mm
Rear suspension spring free length, 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. 270mm
Front fork travel, 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.
Rear fork travel, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

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DIMENSIONS

Length, 86.22 in.
Width, 28.35 in.
Height, 40.55 in.
Seat height, 31.25 in.
Footrest height, 14 in.
Wheelbase, 57.88 in.
Ground clearance, 6 in.
Dry weight, 436.5 lbs.
Fuel tank capacity, 5 gals.
Sump oil capacity, 5.25 pints
Gearbox capacity, 1.32 pints
Rear diff. capacity, 0.4 pint
Front fork capacity, 120cc per leg.

WHEELS, TYRES & BRAKES

Front tyre, Pirelli sport 3.50 x 18 in.
Rear tyre, Pirelli sport 4.10 x 18 in.
Cast alloy wheel rims front and rear
Hydraulically operated twin-disc front and single disc rear brakes with integral operation from the brake pedal. One of the discs on the front wheel is operated

independently by the front brake lever
Tyre pressures, front 30psi, rear 33psi
Disc diameters; front, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. rear, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
Stop lamp operated by both brake levers.

ENGINE/GEARBOX

90 degree, V-twin-cylinder four-stroke, 83mm bore x 78mm stroke
Capacity, 844cc
Compression ratio, 10.2:1
Output 81 bhp @ 7,600 rpm
Overhead valves, pushrod operated
Full flow cartridge-type oil filter
Primary drive reduction, 1:1.235
Multi-plate clutch
Constant mesh, five-speed gearbox.
Gearbox ratios: 1st, 2:1; 2nd 1.388:1, 3rd, 1.047:1, 4th 0.869:1, 5th 0.750:1
Final drive ratio, 4.714:1
MPH @ 1,000 rpm in top — 17.37
Final drive by shaft to rear wheel differential gear.

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