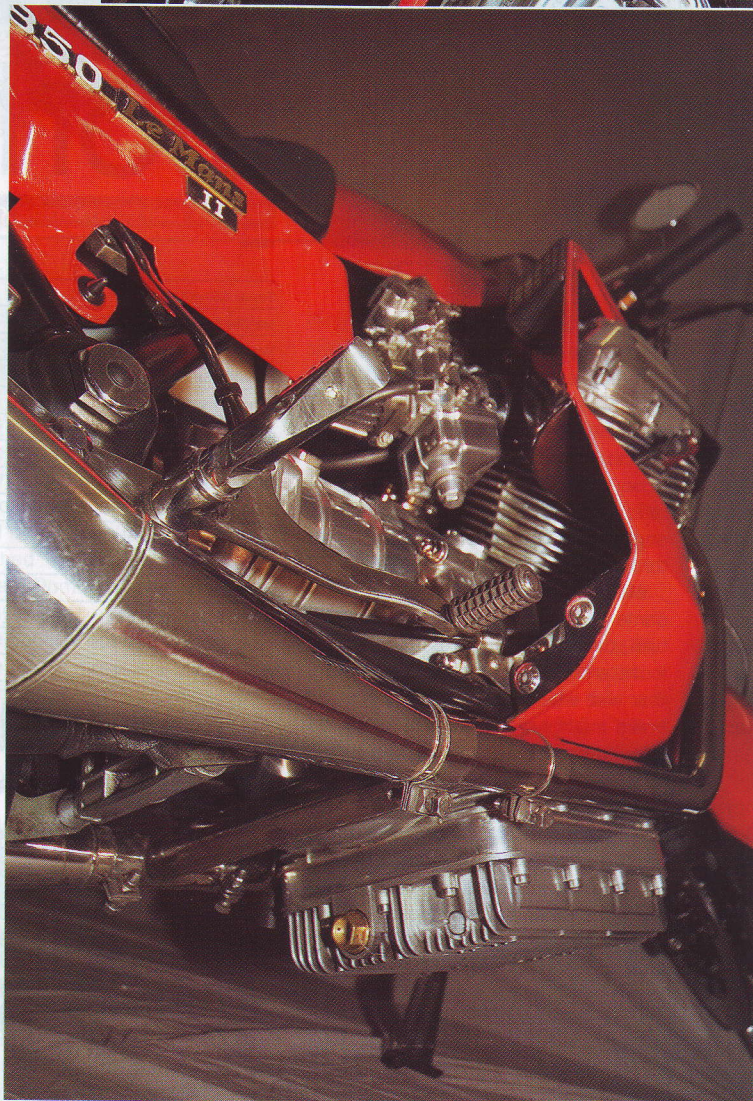


Showstoppers

MOTO GUZZI LE MANS II

WORDS/PHOTOS: Chris Pearson







Show **Stoppers** MOTO GUZZI LE MANS II



This stock looking and immaculately finished 1980 Moto Guzzi Le Mans mark II is owned by Bob Francis who bought it in this condition following a couple of bike-less years. Bob, having had a lifetime of fettling and restoring bikes in his own workshop, had moved house and lost his precious space, "I didn't even have a little garden shed" he remarked. Bobs immaculate Domiracer had previously won many awards at shows up and down the country but this was sold when the house move took place due to the lack of space. After many months of pacing the carpet and generally looking forlorn Bobs other half literally forced him to buy another bike, but this time it had to be a finished item ready to ride and not another long-term restoration project. Bob (65) turned to another bike restoring mate, engineer Billy Dutton, when it became time to source such a beast as he had several potential bikes in his possession. Dutton, a successful racer in his day, is well known for his immaculate Domiracers from the 60s and the same, lovingly carried out work has been applied to

this Guzzi. Billy has remanufactured every part possible in stainless steel while much polishing and general mechanical improvement is also evident, the wheels for example took a whole winter to strip, polish and then rebuild.

Other work carried out includes revisions to the riding position, the bars for instance have been raised to make the seating more comfortable, this involved much work, as the original ace bar set up are a snug fit into the top fairing. Brackets had to be made to move and lift the fairing up and out of the way to enable the higher bars to be fitted while still looking like a Le Mans. An electronic ignition has replaced the original but that apart, the engine remains very much as it was when new with no mechanical attention having been required during its life. Guzzi's really are built like tanks and this one certainly is, it has never failed to run and doesn't burn a drop of oil.

Once in his possession Bob did undertake to renew the paintwork and this has finished off the whole job making a stunning machine that

stands out amongst others whenever parked up. The bike has been touted around the classic shows receiving much acclaim in the process from all in the know. Bob recently gave in to some considerable pressure to sell the Le Mans and immediately after the 04 Stafford show ownership passed to Loughborough based Moto Guzzi Club member Jo Caruso. In Jo's hands hopefully the Le Mans will go on to be part of the UK show scene and improve further still.

With the Guzzi now gone the space it left has been filled by two Honda fours, a CB550 and a 650 Nighthawk, both of which are currently undergoing extensive restorations and rebuilds.

What has surprised Bob has been the cost of replacing parts on the Jap fours when compared to his old Domi's and Guzzi, especially when it comes to engine components as there are four of everything in the Hondas and this does begin to mount up. We can't wait to see the final results of his labours and we fully intend to catch up with Bob and his Hondas very soon.