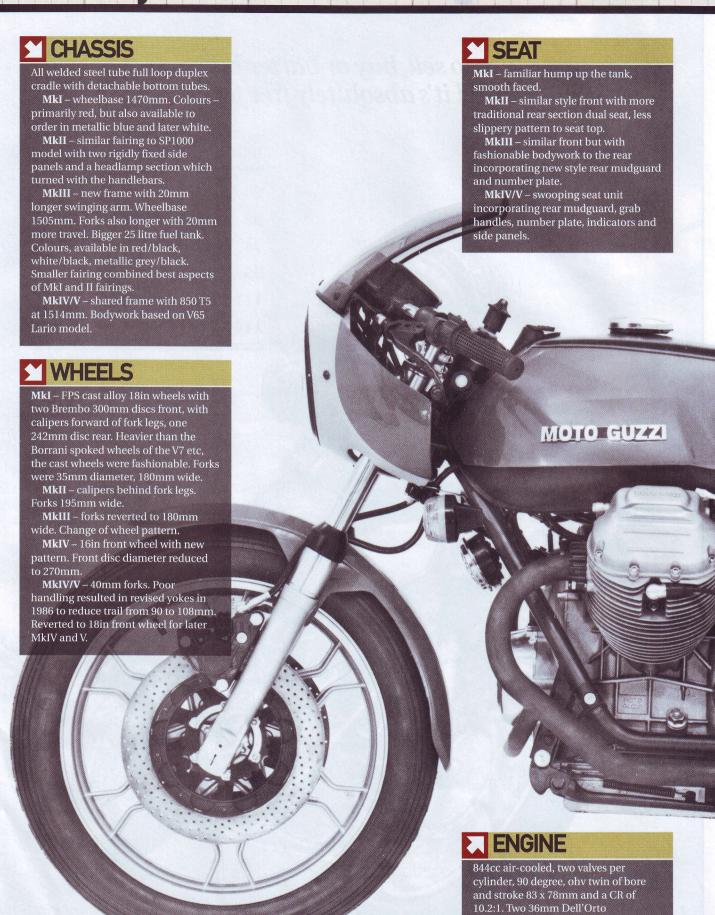
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carburettors. Black exhaust system. (9.8:1 MkIII with angular cylinder and heads and chromed exhaust system) MkIV/V 88 x 78mm equating to 949cc with 9.5:1 CR, two 40mm Dell'Ortos.

MOTO GUZZI LE MANS

Though by no means a big bike in today's world, the Le Mans epitomised the hairy, racer on road muscle bike of the time. The Japanese were not producing motorcycles with much true resemblance to what they raced and the British industry was in its death throes, so it was left to the Italians to lead the way in race-bred chassis design.

The Le Mans was born from the successful race antics of the V7 based works endurance machines, the first with the 844cc engine.

Without doubt, the MkI Le Mans has become a classic style icon, a yardstick which, like the 916 Ducati of years later, was virtually impossible to better in subsequent updates. As such the MkI is a highly prized

and sought after machine. It made its debut at the Milan Show of 1975 and quickly established itself as one of the finest handling machines of the day.

The MkII appeared in 1978, sporting a fairing and sundry other alterations. It was still an excellent motorcycle though the initial raw appeal of its predecessor was lost. By 1980 UK importers Coburn & Hughes were forced to give their MkIIs a black and gold paintjob in order to shift unsold stock.

The MkIII of 1981 could boast no less than 44 significant modifications and improvements and its new look, almost Katana-esque angular styling proved successful enough to re-establish Guzzi in the sales charts. It was to become the best

1975 TO 1993

seller of all Le Mans and enjoyed the longest production run. Which is more than could be said about the MkIV, proving that bigger is not always better. The first of the 1000cc models suffered from appalling quality and assembly standard.

Taking heed of universal complaint, Guzzi introduced the MkV in 1987, a much improved machine that soldiered on with only few changes until being retired in 1993. It was a very good machine but was produced several years too late. The Le Mans in all its forms is much revered in Guzzi circles.

