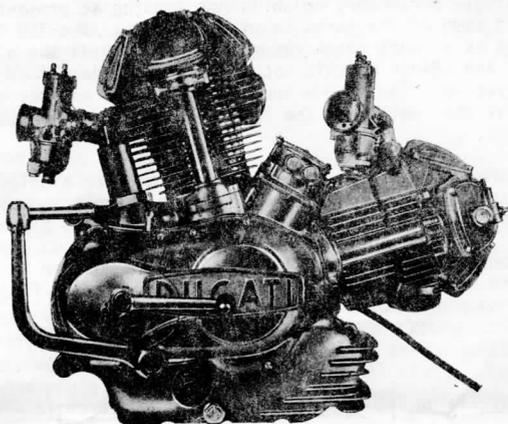


TECHNICAL



HELMING'S HINTS

Dear Joel,

Just received the July newsletter. Fantastic! The enthusiasm shown by you and the others who contributed to the paper is most gratifying. I was beginning to think I had the only Duke in the state, but already I see I'm wrong. So sign me up and send me one of the DIOC T-shirts so I can start socking it to the local Nippon nudnicks! Enclosed is a check for membership and T-shirt plus a modest contribution to help you get the club off the ground.

I am 36, single, and work as a power plant test engineer on nuclear submarines for General Dynamics in Groton, Conn. Last June I bought a mint 750 750 Sport with 1100 miles on it from a private party in Danbury, Conn. It was originally sold by Albert Sigmans Motorcycles in Pennsylvania. It is serial No. 753157 and was built in September 1973.

I've been into bikes for 15 years and owned half a dozen Triumphs and BSA's in the sixties. I sold my last Bonneville in 1968 and completely dropped out of the bike scene from '68 to 1975 to concentrate on racing cars. My last recollection of Ducatis was a line of beautifully engineered but underrated small bore one lungers. However, about a year ago I quit cars and returned to my first love. Was I surprised to pick up a magazine and read about, of all things, a 750 cc 2 cylinder Ducati! The more I read, the more I liked. Having been brought up on Limey bikes, I always figured if God had intended motorcycles to have 4 cylinders, electric starters, water cooling, super quiet mufflers, directional signals, etc., etc., he would have given us 2-wheeled Toyotas. I saw the Duke as a sort of updated Limey bike, maintaining the same light weight and mechanical simplicity, but with even better handling, more power, no vibration, and no oil leaks. I had a chance to buy a really beautiful 1971 Norton factory road racer but chose the Ducati because of the more modern engineering.

I've only had the Duke on the road for about 3 weeks, but so far it's been everything I'd been lead to expect. The biggest improvements over my last Bonneville are the increased cornering clearance, better brakes, lack of vibration, but most especially the thundering acceleration from 75 on up. Even a well tuned Bonneville or Norton in stock trim gets short winded above 80, but not the Duke. On the debit side are the quality of the electrics, decals, and the black stripe on the tank. I have no complaints with the quality of the fiberglass -- maybe I got a particular good one.

Although I haven't owned mine very long, I've discovered a few things which may be of interest to other 750 Sport owners:
 - K&N sells a pair of custom-made air cleaners for the Sport. They thread on in place of the stock air horns and are available with either black or chrome end caps (No. RU-128/2 and RC-128-2 respectively). Cost is \$11.95 per pair for the plain set and \$12.95 for the chrome set. K&N's address is P.O. Box 1329, Riverside, California 92502. These also fit 1972 & '73 750 GT's.

-In answer to Rick Williams, I sent for info on the pointless ignition advertised in Cycle. They sell two models, both use a light emitting diode, photo-transistor, and solid state control unit. Model 1 includes one set of the above, plus a "special" six volt, dual-plug coil and a dropping resistor. Nothing extra to buy, guaranteed 10 years -- \$105.00. Model 2 is for people already using automotive coils and find that their points are burning up and/or their battery runs down. Includes 2 complete sets of the above electronic components

(separate circuitry for each cylinder but no coils). Brings amperage back to stock level by reducing dwell to 50 degrees. Same guarantee --\$145.00. I have requested info on pointless ignition from several other companies (Powers Electronics, Multifire, etc.), but none of them sell anything for the Duke. -Thanks to the previous owner, I had to buy a 22 x 1.5 mm tap to clean out the threads for the oil drain plug in the crankcase. This little jewel took me three weeks to find and cost me \$17.00. To save someone else the trouble, I would be glad to loan it to other club members for a couple of bucks (to cover postage and handling).

- Hint: don't overtighten the rear axle jam nuts! The inner (fishmouth) spacers will dimple the swing arm, making chain adjustments very difficult.

- Hint #2: To make a decent tool kit, supplement the original tools with other useful items (channel locks, spare points, electrical wiring, etc., etc.), wrap it all in a rag, then a plastic bag, and stow it transversely in the empty space under the seat over the rear carb air horn. Hang the bundle on a couple of long, heavy-duty rubber bands strung between the seat mounting lugs on the frame. The tools are now out of sight, out of the weather, easy to get at (though the left side cover), shock mounted, plus this method frees the lockable seat compartment for day-today items.

- In answering Mark Bishop and others looking for parts and service in southern New England, try Ham's M/C in Norwalk or Hamden Cycles on State Street (Rt. 5) in Hamden. Both of them are race-oriented (roadracing) and know Ducatis. I know Hamden Cycles has a good selection of valve adjusters because I miked their entire collection and mounted them on a large piece of cardboard, all labeled!

- Just for the hell of it, I painted my helmet to match the dark yellow of the 750 Sport. Rust-oleum Yellow, # 659, is a fairly close match. Not close enough for touching up the bike itself, but not bad for your "skid lid". If anyone knows of a closer match, let's hear it.

- And now, for my *piece de resistance*. To combat the chronic rear fender cracking on the Sport, I have just completed building the world's slickest combination rear fender brace and luggage rack. It is built basically of 1/2-inch EMT (electrical conduit) and is very light and inexpensive, yet provides approximately 100 square inches of luggage area, and the rear fender does not move! Also, when painted to match the frame, it doesn't mar the lines of the bike too badly. On top of all of this, it requires no drilling or welding, so it can be removed quickly and easily without leaving a trace on the machine. Will try to send a sketch and/or photos in a future letter.

That's what I can offer. Here's what I need:

In the absence of a shop manual for the 750, I would like to know the basic procedure for top end overhaul (valve seat angles, ring gap, shimming of bevel gears, installation of valve guides, head torque, etc.) Also, where is the best place to tap in for an oil cooler and oil pressure gauge?

Is anyone in a position to make or obtain duplicates of the original "Ducati" decals for the tank and seat? I want to replace the cheap handlebar switches, but have little familiarity with other current bikes. Who makes the best switch set up, including kill button and headlight flasher?

I have heard a rumor that Cook Neilson and Phil Schilling were writing a shop manual for the twins. If this is true, it is great news. Does anyone know anything about this? JOHN HELMING, 57 Homestead Road, Ledyard, Conn. 06339 phone# 203-536-7540



A DUCATI SHOP MANUAL? GIMME SOME SLACK, I AINT THAT GOOD. I ONLY SPECIALIZE IN EASY THINGS LIKE PARTING OCEANS AND ALL...