

TECHNICAL

(Editor's note: This is a copy of a letter from the Lester Tire & Wheel Company to Richard Weiss, a DIOC member and WERA road racer, concerning the availability of cast type wheels for Ducatis.)

Richard Weiss
74 Farragut Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45218

Dear Sir:

Congratulations on your wins and your recent photo in CYCLE NEWS. There apparently was some mis-information given to you at the Indy meet. At the present time we have no plans for the production of Ducati Wheels. Six months ago the new models for this fall were scheduled, Ducati and Moto Guzzi T3 were among them. The engineering on both models were completed. Due to other commitments both were delayed. Then the Guzzi was scheduled for this winter with tooling currently in progress and the Ducati was shelved.

Every new model we produce calls for an extensive cash outlay ahead of time on our part, for design, development and tooling, before the first wheel is sold.

One of the necessary ingredients for us for us to tool for new models is customer request, and for Ducati this has been for from overwhelming.

I am not asking for one man or small group to flood us but we are looking for general response.

Due to the similarity between the Moto Guzzi and the Ducati front wheel it will be possible to employ a different machining operation to the casting designed for Guzzi and produce a 18 x 2.15 wheel for the front of the Ducati, which we will probably make a few samples, and in the case of the SS with the rear being the same, this wheel would also fit there. Unfortunately for both of us this rim is too narrow for rear racing slicks.

I don't know the possibility of adapting parts from another motorcycle sets with you, but within the next 6 weeks we will have a 3.00 x 18 wheel assembly for the Kawasaki KZ 750, which employs a cushion drive hub and disc brake. This particular wheel is the closest in design to the SS layout, but it is not a direct bolt up as we prefer to supply. If you care to go into the adaptation I will be pleased to help you on my own time.

As to your comment about stock rim sizes - our "standard" front rim width is 2.15 and on all Japanese and BMW the original width is 1.85.

We provide a 3.00 rim width on the Goldwing rear which was originally 2.50, and this next spring we will announce 18 x 3.00 optional rear wheels for more models we currently produce along with a 2.50 x 18 optional front wheel.

Thank you for your letter.

Yours Sincerely,
Charles Ptacek
Chief Engineer
The Lester Tire and Wheel Co.
26881 Cannon Road
Bedford Heights, Ohio 44146

BITS AND PIECES

I currently own 5 Ducatis. A 750 GT four years old and running strong (providing it gets frequent attention), a 450 single scrambler, which is not running at present, having loaned some of its parts to my 350 Single. The 350 has been set up as a short track racer. I have removed the alternator rotor and stator on this machine and run a dead loss battery-coil set up. The engine seems to run freer and rev quicker without the weight of the flywheel-rotor and the drag of the magnets.

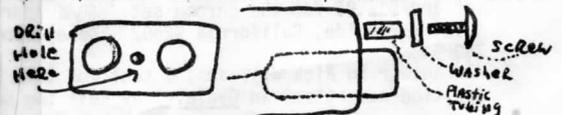
The other two Ducatis at my place are a 200cc single. This machine was given to me in pieces, so I don't know its age or anything about it. It has a very high domed piston, 67mm bore. The engine looks to be complete and if not I probably have enough parts around to make it run. However it will have to wait till a couple of other projects are finished. One of those projects is a 160 single which I am helping a friend rebuild. VANCE PONSFORD, RR1, Campbell River, B.C. Canada V9W 3S4.

Tips of Timing Tool, Scarab Bleeding, Condensers & H/Bars

Even though it is pretty expensive, the factory timing pointer is a worth while investment if a person is planning to keep his Ducati for any great length of time. I paid about \$27.00 for mine from Storms Ducati shop, which does not handle the brand any more. I assume that is the going price elsewhere. Of course it requires that you also have a timing light and the allen head wrench needed to remove the plug in the side case. While of the subject of timing, I have found that when buying a timing light it really is better to go ahead and spend the extra money for an inductive lead timing light. Also, if your Ducati has an electronic ignition remember, NEVER RUN THE ENGINE WITH ONE CYLINDER DISCONNECTED. This can, in some cases cause severe and expensive damage to the ignition system. This applies also to any other vehicle with an electronic ignition.

On bikes with the SCARAB brakes there is no provision on the caliper for bleeding the system. There is a complicated and time consuming procedure for taking care of this chore that is recommended by the factory, but there is another way. If you are refilling the system you will gently tap on the caliper and brake line with a small rubber or plastic hammer, this will cause some of the air bubbles to rise to the master cylinder and be displaced into the air. Some more air can be expelled by vigorously pumping the brake lever. This air escaping will be in the form of a foam or thousands of tiny bubbles. Make sure that the master cylinder always has enough fluid in it. After about 15 minutes of this pumping you should be getting some pressure in the line. You could keep this up for a long enough length of time and eventually your system would be bled, or you can pump it up and hold it by making a giant rubber band out of an old inner tube and wrapping this rubber band around the brake lever and handlebar. Leave it overnight and your brake should be in operating condition in the morning. If not re-wrap it and leave it one more night. While this may seem Mickey Mouse (it is!) it will work.

On pre-1975 Ducatis there have been cases of Condensers not grounding properly. This can be fixed by tapping a small hole in the boss surrounding the condensers, between and just slightly above them. See drawing. Just make sure that the washer rests up against the back of the condensers and the screw is firm in the hole drilled into the boss. The rubber tubing is only on there to cover up the threads that are going to show between the washer and the newly drilled hole. This procedure is also very valuable if you have replaced the standard condensers with another type. This is a very simple operation but should be performed with care.



For people with short arms, the handlebars off a Rotary Suzuki work great for a Ducati. Especially those off a GT 185 Suzy.

Electrical switches are a sore subject with Ducati owners but I finally gave up on mine and rewired my bike to use Suzuki switches. Anyone interested can contact me and I'll furnish a good wiring dia-

