

TECHNICAL

TECHNICAL BITS AND PIECES

BY Dave Richardson

Valve guides never lasted well in the 750s, and the 860s are even worse. An easy way to slow down the wear is by replacing the guides with guides from one of the singles (250, 350, 450). It seemed to that part of the reason the 860s are harder on guides is that the added length of the screw adjuster on the rocker arm causes too much deflection of the valve. The Canadians came to the same conclusion and tried substituting 750 rocker arms with good results. The Canadian importer contacted the factory immediately came up with enough 750 rocker arm kits to convert every 860 in Canada. The reason the 860s have the screw adjusters is that Berliner demanded if for easier adjustment. Anyone who has ever set valves on a Jap four-cylinder DOHC engine especially a Kaw 650 could tell you there is nothing that hard about setting valves with winkler caps.

Don't expect Berliner to come up with rocker arm kits as the Canadians did, as they are afraid of causing a scare that could affect future sales.

The RT 450 makes a neat cafe bike! Its one of the few singles to come with a frame design similar to the twins. Some bracing should be done to the steering head if its to be raced, however I've raced mine twice so far without bracing without any real problems. Forks from an 860 fit right on the RT, with the addition of one small spacer on the ring nut.

Both the 450s I have are being fitted with Dell'Orto pumper carbs. A 750 sport rear manifold part #0755-92-595, will adapt a 30 - 36 mm carb. It looks as though the rear manifold for a 900ss (part # 0765-92-590) will work for a 38 - 40 mm carbs, although I haven't got mine yet so I'm not sure. On the RT, the front seat bracket gets in the way, so I moved it back 1 1/2 inches. The studs in the seat can be easily broken out of the fiberglass base and moved back. Don't bother to re-fiberglass it in place. Any cheap rivet gun will nail the seat cover back down.

Handlebar switches from a 1976 Yamaha enduro, part #498-83972-60 will make a good replacement for the stock 860 switches. I have seen the stock switches fail miserably when exposed to dusty conditions. The reason I chose the Yamaha replacement is that it gives you all the important controls on one side, so that you can throw away the throttle grip at the same time and replace it with something like a Tomaselli. The stock throttle has a nasty habit of breaking cables. I would also recommend you get a dual cable unit such as the one that comes on the 750 GT & Sport (part #0795-54-663). A similar unit is available from Barnett that goes for half the price and can also be used on bikes with 40mm carbs.

HERE'S A BREAKDOWN OF THE WIRING TRANSPLANT FOR THE SWITCHES

Item	Ducati Wire Color	Yamaha Wire Color
Horn	Pink.....	Pink
	Black.....	Screw on horn switch (grnd)
High & Low	Blue.....	Yellow
	Green.....	Green
Turn Signals	Green - Black.....	Dark Brown
	White - Black.....	Dark Green
	Orange.....	Brown - White
Headlight On and Off	Yellow-Black	Blue-White
	Brown.....	Brown
	Yellow-white

A nice way of getting rid of the remnants of the left side switches is to replace the whole clutch lever assembly with something like a Magura power lever. This switch would also make it necessary to get a new choke lever. A good replacement is one from a Kawasaki F-3 -175cc model as it accepts the stock cable without modifications and clamps to the handlebars. If you do go to the Magura power lever, you might also remove the preload washers under the clutch springs. This will allow full use of the longer pulling Magura lever and will keep the clutch from dragging when waiting at stop-lights.

I would also suggest that you disconnect the city country horn switch as it has poor contacts and often keeps the horn from working.

If you also need a kill button or electric start button, find a handlebar mounted switch with 2 leads. The one I found was Honda part #35130-360-701. Its only problem is that it has to be insulated from the handlebar by electrical tape or a piece of innertube. The wires for the starter are gray and blue; the kill switch wires are purple and red-black.

Here are approximate prices for above mentioned parts.

Yamaha switches-----	\$17.00	Any handlebar switch wires
Magura Clutch Lever-----	10.00	not mentioned were not used.
Kawasaki choke.....	3.00	There should be one Ducati
Honda button switch.....	8.00	wire and a whole handful of
Tomaselli throttle.....	16.00	Yamaha wires.
Barnett Throttle	6.00	

All Desmo models can be hopped up with what the factory calls an "updated camshaft". Part number for 250, 350 is 0609-29-013; 450 is 0616-29-010; 750s are #0765-29-013 & 0765-29-023; 860-900 are #0775-29-013 and #0775-29-023. All are billet cams and are for the most part, cheaper than reground cams from various "speed" tuners.

Installation in the twins is a straight bolt-up operation; the singles require considerable head gouging. On all models, check to make sure closing rocker arms do not interfere with valves or the head castings.

In case your dealer doesn't know, 860 gasket sets are in stock at Berliner hiding under part #0775-07-305.

In case you've been having trouble getting parts lately, heres an interesting, unconfirmed story. Berliner and Ducati have not been on good terms for a long time. The main problem have been that Ducati has been talking about drastic price increases. Also Berliner Motors has told Ducati that they don't want the 860s at any price until they start looking like motorcycles again. Don't get me wrong, I own two of the "ugly things". At any rate, Berliner hasn't been ordering any parts at all for about a year, pending a possible change of US importers. Happily, things have been worked out and a big boatload of parts was to be here by the middle of December.

Speaking of Berliner, I would like to openly thank them for helping me obtain many non-standard parts through a fair amount of extra effort on their part. I quite often hear it said that Berliner just don't care about the owners when parts are hard to get. From my experience with both Berliner and Ducati; any problem with parts is mainly a problem of a distribution chain running half way around the world from the dealer to Berliner to Ducati and sometimes on to whoever made the part for Ducati. There is room for improvement on everyones part though.

Someone mentioned in the 3rd DIOC that we should all get together and tell Cook we want to see a test article on a 860 in Cycle magazine. First off there are a lot of bikes to be tested at Cycle and Cook in particular has already been criticized for spending too many pages talking about one certain bike, (Ducati 750SS) that doesn't sell as well as Gary Scott T-shirts at Harley Davidson or Yamaha. Without digging through back issues, I seem to remember tests on the 750 GT, Sport, Super Sport, plus hop up article on the GT and SS.

I agree with the feeling a lot of Ducati riders share that the bikes would sell better if they were better represented in the magazines. There are three main areas that need improvement in this area. First, the mags have to be told in a nice way to try not to come off sounding so negative. I don't mean they didn't like the bike, I just happen to object to comments like that at the beginning of Cycle Worlds' 860 test where they said "rare but worth the trouble of obtaining one. That's an immediate turn off to people looking to buy the bike. Most test articles on non-Jap or German road bikes seem to come across this way. The second problem is that Berliner is a little too cautious about letting out bikes for tests for fear someone will do a bad test. The 750 got a lot of exposure and all that I read was very complimentary except a test in a now defunct rag called Supercycle. The third problem is a little harder to deal with. It involves "wineing and dining" the magazines a little to get exposure for a certain company or new model.

The best example of this was the introduction of the Suzuki RE5 Rotary bike. All the major magazines were invited to come see the bike before it was released and hear a tech discussion on it. Naturally they all did an article on what they saw. Next Suzuki invited them all back to go on a short "tour" on the bike for riding