

Stories Con't.

stack, for you youngsters) on the carburetors, rear-sets, and clip-ons. I rode it to college for over a year and it rewarded me by not only being consistently fast and reliable, but also by introducing me to several young ladies who apparently admired Italian bikes.

Naturally, just as I was getting truly familiar with the 200 Ducati introduced their 250's. The Monza and Diana models impressed me, but not to the point of abandoning my faithful Elite. Ducati had a second blow aimed at me, however, and it came out in the form of the original MK III. Silver and blue, clip-ons, rakishly mounted mechanical tach and all-I knew I couldn't live without it.

Well, that MK III was everything it promised and more. Stunningly fast, beautiful to behold, untouchable in the corners, and harder than the Falcon 50 to start. As many times as I'd humiliate my friends in the curves, they'd humiliate me in the drive-in by starting their then-new Super Hawks with a flick of the button.

At this point, I did two things--one good, the other bad. I'll have to leave it to you to decide which is which, because I not only got married, but also bought a brand new Honda Super Hawk. A clue to the above question is that I no longer have the Super Hawk, but am still married to the same woman. (Answers of "all the above" don't count). The Honda was also fast, but added reliability, comfort, and a headlight that actually illuminated the road to its list of virtues. In retrospect, I can see that the Italian disease was upon me. For, despite being an excellent motorcycle in every respect, the Honda, for some reason, bored me. Perhaps I missed those hour-long sessions in the alley kicking and cursing.

Fate stepped in to (I guess) save me. Right about this time some high liver stepped into the local cycle shop and purchased a brand new Mk III. He started it, and ran right into a telephone pole. The physical damage to the bike was negligible, the psychological damage to the rider was permanent. The following day, in trade for the Honda, I was the proud possessor of a very late MK III with rear sets and the works. It wasn't really much easier to start than the earlier one--the crooked kick lever not helping much--but I learned the right curses and it's with me to this day. Tell me about your Japanese bikes--I've driven it as much as 300 miles in a day and still think it's one of the finest small bore bikes ever conceived.

Since the purchase of the MK III way back when, it has, of course been all down hill--at least as far as my wife is concerned. It was later joined by the very last RT450 Desmo the local shop had to offer, and in quick succession, a 350 assembled out of parts, a 750 GT purchased new, and most recently, an almost mint 450 Jupiter purchased from a rather desperate individual.

So there it is--the story of an obsession. My only question is: If I'm as crazy as all my neighbors and relatives say, how come I'm so happy?



Nothing to it! With my Italian schematic and a little ingenuity I'll have this short traced in no time.

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