

DIOC NEWS

BY JOEL ELIEL, DIRECTOR

The big news for this issue is the Ducati Darmah, 900 Desmo Sport, also known as the "Tiger Sport". I tested one out yesterday and my enthusiasm for this all new Duke twin is uncontainable. The bike features all new cosmetic design, all new electrics by Bosch, cast wheels and Japanese instruments. All of which go together to make this the most improved Ducati ever.

When the Carolina truck drove up and the crate unloaded. Several people awaited the unveiling of the Tiger. The crate was opened, the wrappings around the gas tank removed, the wheels installed along with the handlebars. We stood back and looked at Duke. The first thing that hits you is the bright Italian red paint job, the white racing stripes accented by black pin-striping. The gas tank is metal, while the tail section and side covers are fiberglass. The machine had this feeling of being in motion even while standing still. The lines of the tank and tail section flowed smoothly in an aerodynamic design; of a sculptured piece of art. The seat could be removed by lifting it off two rubber sockets in the back and sliding it forward and off to expose the tool compartment that's in the rear tail section. Put the seat back on and lock it in place with a key and lock that is built into the rear tail section. The left sidecover comes off by unscrewing a large screw and popping it off two rubber sockets. This reveals the rear carburetor (32mm Dellorto the bike also comes with two 40mm pumpers). The right cover hides the huge Yuasa 32amp battery.

The two mag wheels are from Campagnolo. They are painted a gold anodized color. I didn't care for this color. I didn't think it went along well with the rest of the bikes color scheme of red, white and black. The Mag wheels design is different from the one on our front cover. The bike I rode had five solid spokes. Rubbers front and rear were 425X18 Michelin M45s. By the way I didn't like the way these wheels felt in heavy cornering. They seemed too slippery.

One of the most useful changes they made on this Ducati had to be the electricals. They were by Bosch. From the huge Bosch Quartz headlight (ala BMW) to the redesigned electric starter assembly, to the wiring harness and electrical components to the Japanese Suzuki type switches the new electrical system on the Tiger Sport inspired confidence in a system neglected by Ducati from the day they began to make motorcycles. At night the huge quartz lamp would flash a beam of light that would do a 747 proud. You could put a beam of light all the way to 14th street. Now you can go scratching on dark nights without having to worry about not seeing where the hell you are going or worrying that the Mickey Mouse Italian electrics were going to crap out on you in the middle of nowhere.

Instrumentation on the 900 Sport is by Nippondenso. They are just like the ones on 750 Hondas. They are clear and visible, they didn't flutter all over the place and wave at you. Unlike the cheap Smiths and Veglias these new ND tach and speedo units look good, work well, and are very visible at night.

Between the instruments are an assortment of idiot lights. In the well designed idiot light module we have indicators for the right and left signals, for the generator, for the lights on and off, high beam, neutral and get ready for this, a side stand light! (?) .Yeah, thats what I said. They put in a side stand light and left out an oil light. Only Ducati could get away with something like that. No one could beleive it. The side stand is the wrong size. It came off an 860 which sits higher than the Tiger. As a matter of fact the bike sits as low as the 900 Desmo. Anyway in order to put the side stand down you have to lean the bike to the right in order to lock it in place. Then you let the bike sit and its almost upright. One slight bump and your \$4,000 work of art goes crashing to the ground. A little hacksawing and welding will remedy this situation real quick. The idiot

lights worked well and were visible in bright sunlight. I liked the way they were arranged and the way they looked.

By now you all are goin to say, "hey man, what's it ride like? How does it feel, yeah, man enough bike info we wanna know if it goes like a Duke oughta go. "OK, ok, you wild freaks, cool it, gimme a break wilya. (somewhere in the background) "How about in yer left ribn man? We'll give ya a break there. Someone pass me some raisin jack. Gulp, gulp mmmm YAAAAAgh! !@#%&*%&*%#*. Gooooood raisin jack. I push the bike out of the shop and there's a bunch of Great Escape Shop groupies hanging around. "Hey man, know who that guy is? Hes the Dee Eye Oh Sea Dyerector. Ooooh wow! Yeah. He knows Dukes. Lets see what he has to say bout this new Duke...yeah man....pass the jack wilya.....

I set the bright red machine on the center stand. Turn the key on and all the idiot light come on, I give it a little choke, hit the starter button, with a positive engagement of the starter the motor turns over easily and Tiger comes to life, she spits and sputters and soon settles to a nice even idle at 1100 Rs. As it warms up I get into my DIOC Motorcycle Tester outfit. A pair of Army issue combat boots, Hang Ten made in Mexico MX denims, (3 sizes too big), a Dixie International made in Japan \$14.95 genuine vinyl jacket with imitation fur collar, my K-Mart \$9.95 Evel Knievel helmet, two True-Value Hardware store bought Blue Ribbon ditch-diggin racing gloves and a dark green bubble shield. Cook Neilson, eat your heart out. I looked sharp.

I get on the waiting beast and immediately I felt I was on a fine sporting machine. The suspension was stiff, but not hard, the controls were within comfortable reach, I punched her into first, let out the clutch and went nowhere. I pushed her off the center stand and tried again. Thing time we eased on to the road. The first thing I noticed was the stiff steering, I took the first corner and she handled like a used 750 Honda with worn suspension. Whatda..ck!?...... The steering dampner. I came back and re-adjusted the thing. The dampner on the Tiger is on the right hand side above the front cylinder. I went out and tried it again. The steering now felt much better and the handling was all Ducati. The shifting pattern, one down and four up on the left was smooth and positive. Snick, snick, snick. They must have improved it over the old 860s. The brakes were strong, smooth and not grabby. The seat looked hard but once underway it felt more comfortable. I didn't ride it very far so I can't tell you how comfortable it'll be on a long ride. It was narrow in the front and a bit wider in the back.

As I rode the Tiger Sport around town, I coul'n't help but feel a sense of superiority. The sound that comes out of those Contis is pure music. Not loud and abrasive. A mellow Motorcyle type of sound. Know what I mean? The acceleration and torque, all typical Ducati. A absolute joy to ride. I went behind the Ft. Lauderdale airport and tried some lean angles around some old warehouses. She would fall into the corners smoothly, lean it all the way as far as you want. The only thing I scraped was the side stand on the left. A superb riding motorcycle without a doubt.

When I got back some guy named Lee Brook was waiting to test ride it. He rode it. Came back and bought it on the spot. \$4106.76 cash with set up, destination charges and state tax. The bikes comes with the 900 Super Sport kit, the 2 40 mm pumpers, two Contis, and an extra sprocket also two throttle cables and two 40mm carb manifolds. Damn! I wish I had one. Oh well, I'll just keep on dreaming. Maybe I'll win the Readers Digest sweepstakes or the New York State Lottery.

The Ducati Darmah Tiger Sport 900 Desmo is a reality and a fine one at that. The Ducati we have all been waiting for! With all the right things. Now we have the cake, and we can eat it. Beautiful styling, reliable engine, no vibration, the finest handling in the world, Mag wheels, dependable electrics and most of all its a Ducati. What more can you ask for? Right? Ducati has finally gotten their shit together. Amen. side stand light!?......?.....! * () no oil light.....jeeez.

Well thats it for now, I would like to thank all of you for the Christmas cards and gifts. Merry Christmas Happy New Year and LETS GET READY FOR DAYTONA! Yeeeeeaaah! Joel