

900 SS OWNER'S REPORT

Continued

a. Vibration: Dead smooth up to 4300 rpm, then a buzz sets in to the footpegs which reaches the annoying level at 5500 rpm, then decrease slightly from there to 8000. Get this, my Triumph Trident is smoother, yes I have checked bolt tightness, retarded spark to 32° etc. No one I've talked to believes me, but it buzzes. It is just slightly smoother at 1900 miles than when new--maybe it will go away?

b. Shifting: Very stiff, I've got sores on my left toe to prove it, through heavy boots. Every gear change, including putting it in first gear, makes a loud "clack". Yes my clutch is adjusted properly, it does shift positively, quickly and 100% reliably, just stiff and noisy. Dismantling the linkage and greasing helped a little. Again maybe more miles....

c. Handling: Mostly great, but it does "yaw" around in turns (wobble!) I think it's the Michelin tires. It's very secure and stable up to about 20-25° lean angles and understeers slightly (tends to sit up when hands are taken off the bars) At about 25° lean angle abruptly transitions to oversteer. It virtually dives into the turns. You have to be ready for it. Trying to hold it at that transitional angle through a sweeping turn takes concentration and it wobbles, wobbles, wobbles. Once you get it all the way over it's stable again. But how often can you really ride like that? Right now my Norton and my Trident handle better.

I think the transition and the wobble are created by the M45 front tire, which has a really dumb contour with corners right where you do the most cornering.

I'm sure I can get this worked out with K-81s etc. My wheels are perfectly aligned, fork fluids equal, pinchbolts tight etc. etc. all the standard stuff has been checked. Tire pressure experimentation and shock preloads made no difference. Nor does sitting on the bike differently. When it wobbles you can't stop it. It also pulls slightly to the right with hands off bars.

Now the good stuff. Power. Gads! I've got the 32mm carbs and Contis and Jazz! I can't wait to try the 40's.

Torque is fantastic. Throttle response is a little ragged at light throttle settings (like cruising at 50) but under all other conditions response is lightning quick and the torque is unreal. Sexy, sexy sound. But I guess you guys already know that.

Quality and finish: With the exception of the fairing and the dashboard the bike looks elegant. I spend hours in the garage just looking at the sucker. A real head turner. Paint, welds, assembly, coastings etc near perfect. Real artistry. Parked next to a Z-1, the Z-1 suddenly becomes invisible.

Miscellaneous: The clutch is very smooth, solid and light. Suspension control feels great to me, just the right amount of springing and dampning. I took a 1200 mile trip on it and it isn't all that uncomfortable at all. A lot better than I expected. The brakes are the best. They are like hitting a brick wall, at any speed. The electrical system seems very strong. While running the headlights 100% of the time I haven't encountered any problems. Several trips to the car wash have little to err the electrical works.

Starting is always a one-kick affair. I only burned 1/2 quart of oil on my 1200 mile trip. I did a Desmo valve check at 450 miles and guess what? spot on, and now at 1900 miles the valves still sound the same with no noticeable valve clatter. The cylinders have full compression at cranking speed, so I guess the engine is OK. I'm going to pull the heads and barrels at 3000 or 4000 miles to check things out.

I find the bike very easy to work on. Spare parts have been easy to obtain. My dealer, Highway 61 Motors in Deer Lake, Pennsylvania. The people there are real

Duke freaks and they are very knowledgeable when it come to the repair and maintenance of these machines.

I was wondering if anyone knows why the winkle adjusting caps come only in .008 sizes? What do you do when you have to take up .004 of adjustment??

Well, if you haven't fallen asleep reading this drivel please send me a picture book shop manual and keep putting out that highly entertaining and informative newsletter.

PS. I know I've written a lot already, but this is very important: The new plastic switch block on the 900SS is nice, but potentially lethal. The dimmer switch is adjacent to the headlight ON-OFF switch. Well, both are small and vague. Dimming the beam with gloved hands can TURN OFF THE HEADLIGHT!! (ooooo aaaaah! Then you're in trouble, as it's hard to operate the switch with the gloved hands anyhow. Owners should bypass the ON-OFF switch and relocate it--or die.

Let us all bow our heads and pray softly. (JE)...

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900 SS report. Well here it is Joel, I'll use the format you showed in your DIOC column in the 7th issue.

1. How reliable is it? Very, that's how and with 5600 miles on it the only thing replaced were the oil passage o-rings between the head and cylinder on the back cylinder only. It was leaking. The rear cylinder seems to be burning a little oil, I think the valve guides must be wearing out, but it is not smoking. The pipe is just a shade darker than the front pipes' color.

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