

features

STEPHANIES' DUCATI 350 MARK III DESMO

By: Stephanie Coulshaw

Eds. Notes: Every once in a while we get some nice photos and some scribes from the ladies in our club and I like to get them in the newsletter so everyone can share their experiences. I mean lets face it its not every day you see a chick riding a Duke. The Duke just aint the kinda bike a pretty little thing should be owning. Like fr'instance what if the electricals give out way out in the middle of the northern outer reaches of the Canadian Tundra? Right? Some chicks just can't handle this kind of trip. So anyway its kind of nice knowing about Stephanies bike and what she does cause I think she is a real trooper and a real Ducati nut and her enthusiasm and devotion to her little bike could be an inspiration to some of us....not mentioning any names....who havent gotten around to finishing those Ducati projects we have started and never finished....right? OK enough ramblings here's Stephanies story.

THE DUCATI pictured here is my 1973 350 MK III Desmo. It is a rare little Duck, since only 50 of the 250/350/450 versions were imported into Canada in 1973 - the only ones in the USA are a few that were imported privately. So, feast your eyes because most of you will probably never see one of these beautiful Ducatis in the the flesh.

I bought the bike April of this year. It had 7400 miles on the clock, and still wore its original Pirellis. The voltage regulator was kaput, and the bike had been idle for a year. To bring it back into shape, a set of Michelin M38 P22's were installed by my husband, and then he got embroiled in the intricacies of the electrics, installing a Mity-Max battery eliminator/voltage regulator. I can give this black box full points, because I've had no problems with the bike in 4000 vigorous miles of riding this summer. It starts first kick, and the lights are even visible at low revs, although the horn doesn't sound with the light on.

Handling is superb, I've never experienced anything so nimble, precise and steady as this little Duke. It has a dry weight of 282 lbs and a wheelbase of 53.4 inches. It feels just like a little 750 Sport, but much more responsive. You don't drive this bike, you think it through corners.

Acceleration is terrific, it being geared perfectly for the powerband; I just love watching the Veglia tach when I go through the gears - it revs so willingly, and each gear stays within the powerband, 6500 to 8500 rpms. It is the only bike I have driven that is tuned to keep up with my husband's Rocket III BSA (to a point anyway - he loses me at over 95 mph). Vibration is noticeable for the first 10 minutes of a ride. You think your legs will fall off below the knee, but this feeling soon passes. I once did over 400 miles in one day on it. (the bike, not the knee). The next day everytime I shut my eyes my legs would go all funny, and I felt I was back on the bike. It is not a touring bike!

You cannot drive this bike slowly - it just won't let you. You become Ago as soon as your bun hits the seat. A short trip to work becomes Imola; when in the company of other bikes it insists on being first. I have been very lucky this year, having not received a speeding ticket. I think the silver metalflake must contain radar confusing material. ! ? 10

The bike is very nice to work on. Everything is accessible, and easy to get at. I shimmed the head up myself, a tedious job for sure, but not all that difficult. You can tell it was built for racing because everything is quickly detachable.

Joel, seemed to think that I should include a few words on myself, why I don't know - I'm sure my Desmo is a lot more interesting to true Ducati fans, but here it is anyway. I have been riding for about six years. Most of this on my 1971 BSA Thunderbolt. I have recently acquired two more Beezas, namely a 1968 Firebird Scrambler, and a 1968 Shooting Star.

I a member of several Owners Clubs, and started the BSA Owners Club of Canada last winter. I have been an instructor with the Canada Safety Council here in Ottawa for two years, teaching people to drive bikes, and enjoy teaching other women to drive properly, not like timid grandmothers.

My main interests are in vintage and classic motorcycles - my husband has a 1955 Gold Star as well as his Rocket III and a 250 Ducati Monza fixed up for trail. The history of motorcycles interests me very much - lets face it, there isn't too much being produced today to interest the true enthusiast, except Ducatis of course! I hope to get a 900SS someday, when I win a lottery, or get on good terms with the bank. Until then I enjoy the best of the little Dukes, my 350 and the best of the Beezas, my Husbands Rocket III - who can ask for more?

