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BY Jerome B. Midler

I just received Newsletter #13 and it had a funny little "x" in the corner so I suppose I had better send you a check for renewal. While I'm at it, maybe I'll add a few comments.

I own a '75 860 GT Electric start with 13,000 miles accumulated and after initial dial in it seems to run better the more miles it goes. It took about 6,000 miles to run in and feel right. I also own a 1977 Suzuki GS 750 4 stroke. Both bikes are equipped with Windjammer, luggage rack, trunk, bags, custom seat, etc. I bought the Suzuki this spring because the price was right and I was very impressed with the one I rode last year. Besides, I wanted to see if a multi was the answer and the Suzy was rated the best bike in its class. So far this year I have ridden 5,000 miles on the Dukely and 1500 on the Suzy. Seems every time I go for a ride, I find myself on the Ducati. When I bought the Suzy, I thought that I would end up selling the Duke and keeping the Suzy but guess what, the Suzy is for sale. It's an excellent machine and more refined than the Dukely in many ways, but although it does everything very well, my wife and I both feel much more secure and confident on the Duke.

Dealer Info: My dealer is Wheels Unlimited, MR 73, Box 172, Rochester, Mn. 55901, tel. 1-507-288-5630. Tim and Tom handle Norton and Ducati. They carry an excellent stock of parts for both brands and Tim is a 1st class wrench. Their labor rate is the lowest in town and they are located directly off Interstate #90 at the U.S. #52 exit if anyone is traveling and needs anything. The machines they have in stock are: 900 SS, DARMAH, 900 GTS, 500 GTL, 860 FT, 500 DESMO and a few Nortons. I'm sure a good deal is available on all models.

Each year there is a large rally in Sturgis, S.D. which draws about 25,000 bikes from all over the country and many from Minnesota. Each year I say I'm going but each year my tender little hinder says it can't take it so - I don't go. (It usually has all it can take at 75 to 100 miles.) This year I found just the thing to keep my rear end happy. A custom seat - a custom seat with a gel packet and an adjustable air unit built in. A seat that bolts onto a Ducati! Last year I sat on a Suzuki with a custom seat. It seemed to feel better than others that I had tried so I talked to the manufacturer and worked with them to have this seat made for Ducati. It is now available for 860 GT and 900 GTS. The 750 GT can also be done on a stock base and the cost is less than many other brands. After installing my seat, I found that I could ride as far as I wanted and not feel that I had to get off. (At least 1000% improvement!)

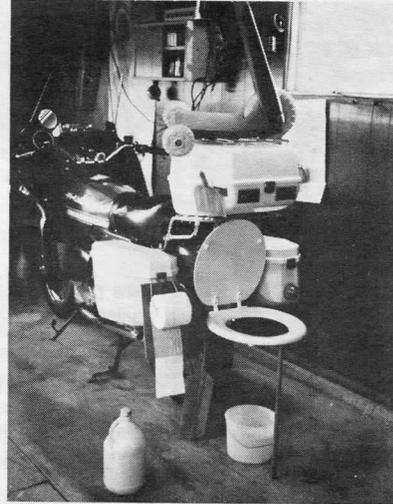
In June we went to the Wisconsin Dells, around 400 miles, on a Sunday. In August we rode to Michigan one weekend, about 10 hours each way and the next week we rode to Sturgis, S.D. which is about 630 miles each way and around 12 hours with gas and food stops. We rode straight through both ways and can't wait until next year. Out of those 25,000 bikes, I could only find 4 Ducatis. How about some kind of Ducati get together at Sturgis next year at the rally? It runs for 1 week the first part of August and in addition to the Black Hills' fantastic scenery, there are many canyons and curves with lots of other activities. Truly Ducati country! Sturgis has 3 blocks of main street roped off for bikes only, with 4 rows up each block. Deadwood has just about as many and a lovely winding canyon runs between the two towns.

On September 24, we took 9 bikes on a supper run. We rode 280 miles and traded off with a 750 Honda automatic and a '76 Harley Liberty Edition, Electra Glide full dresser. The Honda wasn't a bad bike but had quite a bit of vibration in the rear footpegs.

Then, we rode the Harley. It was a beautiful ride with the suspended seat, but after less than a mile my wife said she wanted off. The bike had the new H.D. seat on it which cost

\$200 and there was absolutely no room between rider and passenger. My wife said her feet kept vibrating off the rear floor boards. I personally do not see how anyone can ride such a thing double. The Ducati is one of the most roomy bikes we've ever ridden and just about the smoothest, especially in the passenger pegs.

I got a lot of static for dressing out a Ducati and someone made the comment that it had everything but a toilet - so -



Note backup transportation for use if usually reliable Ducati should decide to rest a bit. Extra bottle can be used if one feels extra cocky and would like to try a smaller target. This should not be attempted without at least a marksman rating!

There it is folks, complete with bucket and poop scooper, just for in such case as you might choose to go to New York City. Just turn on the stereo, sit down and have at it. Now I know for sure that I have the only Ducati in the world set up this way. Oh well, enough of this nonsense. But oh tis bliss! Good music with that extra bass harmony now and then!

I would like to list the things that I have done to my 860 to dial it in. Maybe someone else can use the info.

1. Added Conti mufflers because they sound so damn good. I added small baffles to tone them down slightly.
2. Drilled holes thru the bottom of the clutch lever/switch assembly and handlebar and inserted a small short self tapping screw to lock the housing to the bar. If the bike should tip over, the housing can turn, shorting out all the wiring in the bars. Same applies to the right side.
3. Installed a small plastic clamp under the rear fender so that the loop in the tail light wire will not be worn through by rubbing on the rear tire. Attached to tail light housing bolt.
4. Installed electric start relay P/N 227 to prevent burning of start switch.
5. Installed headlight relay P/N 0960.38.223. (Causes high RPM miss.)
6. Installed a new quality fuse box from data processing equipment. Automotive type should work also if it can be fitted.
7. Drilled the small disc inside the rear shocks with 6 holes in it, enlarging them .003 from .067 to .070 and replaced the stock oil with heavier 10w fork oil. For heavier loading, try drilling 3 holes and use stock oil (around 5w).
8. Replaced front fork oil with 5w (210 cc)
9. Drilled lower center of swing arm and installed grease zerk at 8,000 miles. Swing arm would hardly move before and moves freely after for a much better ride. Stock zerk was inaccessible because of electric start solenoid. Do grease your swing arm. (Stock zerk popped out when greasing new one. Quick insurance would be to put a hose clamp over stock zerk before it pops out.) We had to remove swing arm, what a job!