

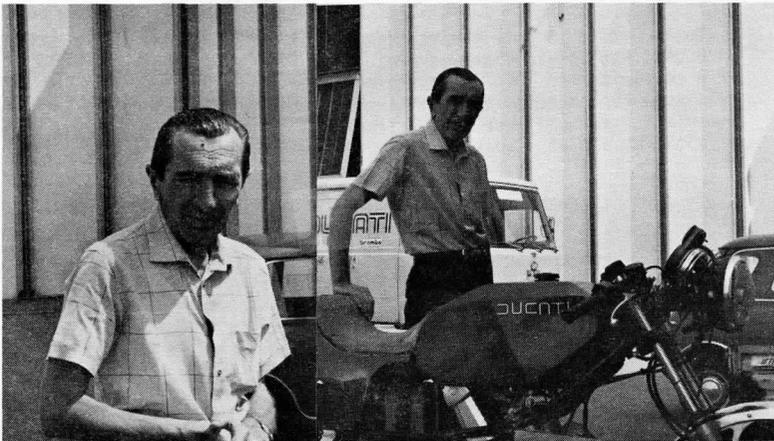
features

During July of 1979, 27 Pantahs samples were distributed to various distributors throughout the world for evaluation. From Sept to the end of 1979 200 more models were produced for sale to the general public. Eighty of these machines will remain for the Italian market. For the immediate future the Pantah still remains a collectors item. This first batch of Ducati 500s will be distinguished by their bright Italian red colors with silver and white panels and stripes. For the 1980s or perhaps later on this year you may see some of the Pantahs coming through in silver with blue and red trim.

While at the track-side briefing Dr. Taglioni chatted with us about his little 500 as if he was talking about a favorite son. He was very enthusiastic about his new engine and was proud of the new technological advances made with this machine. Years of work with the 750s and 900s brought many improvements that were incorporated into this model especially the knowledge learned in international competition. For instance he claims that this engine produces 50.5 horses at the rear wheel at 8500 rpms. "One can easily achieve 5 additional horses by simply removing the air cleaners," he said. "The engine will spin to 11,000 with no problems at all."

All the years of developing machines seem to be tiring the old Master at Ducati and he spoke of retiring soon. But as one of the technicians at the track told us "Dr. Taglioni has been retiring for the past 10 years." Throughout the entire factory there was a sense of deep respect and admiration for this man that has been the father of Ducati motorcycles since it's beginning.

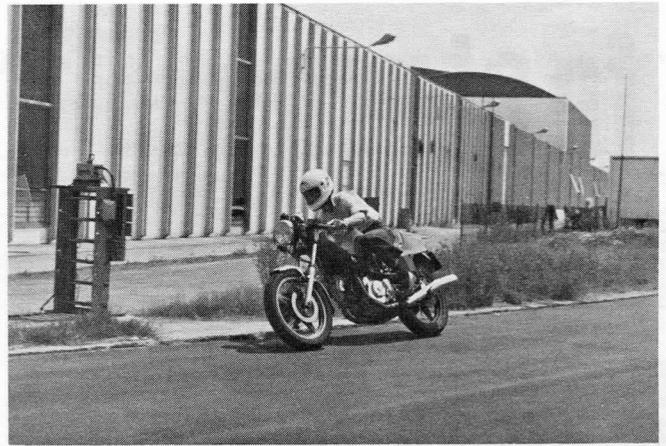
The bike that we were to ride was the test bed for the present Pantahs. This machine has accompanied the Ducati racing teams on most of their outings. The machine has been used primarily to familiarize the racers with whichever track they were scheduled to race on. Sort of a practice bike. At one time the bike was driven non-stop from Bologna to Barcelona Spain. During all these ventures the machine used no oil at all and developed no engine failures. A sloppy



Dr. Taglioni

piston to cylinder clearance was used on this test bike and it still used no oil. The clearance will be closer on the actual production models.

When we rode the Pantah we found that the bike handled flawlessly and could be flung into turns with just a whisper of effort. The knee indentations on the gas tank helped a great deal in using body English to make handling a breeze. It felt as light and nimble as a 250. From 1000 rpms to 7000 the engine was glass smooth at revs over 7000 it jumped and took off like a rocket. Although the Pantah lacks that raw gut torque of the larger 750 and 900 brothers it was still very powerful. The Pantah has none of that low end pulling torque the large V-Twins are so famous for.



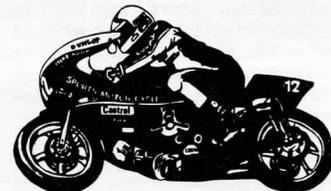
Brakes on the 500 Twin were excellent. You could lock the wheels at will. A couple of times during our test we locked the wheels and were surprised at the straight forward attitude that the machine maintained. The small Brembo calipers performed well for their size.

The transmission was as smooth as one could want. Shifting was very easy and neutral could be found at the slightest touch. The sound of the bike was very quiet due to the tooth belts and the low decibel Contis fitted. There are rumors that Ducati will have a 75 horsepower hop up kit available for this model in the latter part of 1980. It is a certain fact that the 500 Pantah will be the bike to beat at 500cc Production racing class.

Franco and I thoroughly enjoyed our ride, although we did not get a chance to really wind the bike out to top speed due to the short track that Ducati has. About the only thing we found wrong with the bike was a very cheap gas cap and the high price it will have when we buy one. But in spite of all this I will be selling my 900 SS when I get home and buying this machine with which I have fallen madly in love with.

In closing I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Ducati Meccanica, Dr. Taglioni, and Franco Cupprini for the most wonderful time they made possible for us during our visit. We certainly wish them a great deal of success with their future endeavors, and on behalf of all of us at the Ducati International Owners Club we want to thank them all for creating such an enjoyable and fascinating collection of motorcycles.

DUCATI 900 WORLD CHAMPION



Isle of Man - 2 June 1978 Driver Mike Hailwood

ISLE OF MAN T-SHIRT

This shirt was created to commemorate the tremendous win of Mike Hailwood at the famed Isle of Man races. It is silk screened in three colors, red, green, black on a white back ground. Printed on both sides. \$6.50 plus \$1.25 shpg & handling.