# features

S41 3.25 x 18 up front and a M45 3.50 x 18 at the rear - provided all the road-holding the bike needed and flicking from left to right through a series of corners was a delight.

The steering is neutral so direction changing is very easy. Just shift your weight across the seat and the bike heads exactly where you want it.

Despite the Darmah's superior low-speed pulling power, the 500 managed to pick up the larger bike in one series of fast downhill left-right, left-right corners even though the revs were being limited to 6000. As the kilometers rolled by, the Pantah grew on us more and more as our confidence in its road-holding ability increased. With the rear-set footrests tucked up out of the way, there is nothing to give any indication of the limits of cornering bank. It was a case of crank it over and see what happens. Nothing did, the bike just scooted around corners in the best traditions of a scratchers machine.

After returning the machine to Norm Frasers, we were told that the bike should be revved out to 9000 rpm to show its full potential. A few days later we had the opportunity to try it out and this is what we found; in first gear the bike will pull 70 kmh, second gives 100 kmh, third brings up an indicated 130 kmh on the Nippon Denso speedometer while fourth yields 160 kmh . Dropping the Pantah into top at this speed saw the revs drop way back - indicating a very tall top cog. Fitting a slightly larger rear sprocket will doubtless result in not just improved acceleration, but also allow the bike to rev closer to it's peak power so that top can be used more effectively. With the present gearing, it is more like an overdrive.

Cruising at 6000 rpm in fith was fairly easy on the engine and also coincides fairly closely with the 6300 rpm torque peak.

The 500 is a very surprising bike. It doesn't accelerate anything like the 860s - there is no punchy low speed grunt - yet it gets up to cruising speed with amazing ease and we found ourselves exceeding the speed limit without realizing it.

Apart from the one-piece crank, the engine has an oil level sight glass on the right hand side and a small window on the left to check the ignition timing. A automotive type oil filter screws up into the bottom of the sump in the same manner of that of the NCR Isle of Man machines and this features must ultimately result in longer engine life.

Bore and stroke is fairly well oversquare at 74 X 58mm and compression ratio is 9.5:1.

Apparently, Ducati originally designed the bike as a clubman road-racer for sale in Italy but decided to add all the road-going gear and market it as a road bike. This shows up in features like a 60 degree included angle between the valves compared with 90 degrees for the bigger V-twins. A closer valve angle allows use of larger valves and more radical camshafts, but whether the cam timing is closer to that of a road-racer is hard to tell as the engine is fairly well mannered. The only fault in power delivery came from the flat spot in the carburation just off idle. Whether this can be cured by adjusting the pilot air mixture screw the accelerator pumps, or both, is yet to be proved. However, it seems likely that some of the off-idle hesitation could be direct result of fitting 36mm carburators to a 500.

During the time we had the Pantah, we clocked up 800 km and used 48.8 litres of petrol for an average of 6.15 litres/100 km (45.86 mpg). Perhaps fitting smaller carburetors - 32 or 34 mm units - would not only cure the off-idle falter, but also improve economy as the gas speed would be higher and thus there would be better atomisation of the fuel with the incoming air. We would like to try it to find out.

There can be no doubt that Ducati designed the Pantah as a sports bike and as such it has come up with a gem that is only slightly flawed. Quality of fibreglass work in the fairing is not high, although the external appearance is very pleasing. The fairing is not just for looks - at high speed the rider is protected from the elements fairly well.

Workmanship in the frame is very good and the "trellis" design certainly looks very sturdy - no doubt accounting in part for the machines excellent manners at all road speeds.

Ducati claims a top speed of 185 kmh for the Pantah but with standard gearing fitted it would need an awfully long straight to achieve this without revving the engine to 10,000 rpm in fourth. We have no doubt the engine could handle these revs as it was buzzed to 9,500 rpm with no problems at all.

The Ducati 500 Pantah answers every street racers hidden desires, but it is likely to be at a price few will be prepared to pay. Although the bike has yet to be put into production, a price of over $3000 has been quoted.

If you are less than 1.7 meters in height, have a desire to own a thoroughly well-mannered medium capacity sports bike and can come up with the money, the Pantah is for you.

But before it goes into production, we would like Ducati to sort out the carburation flat spot, fit a better padded seat, lower the gearing a little and rectify the heavy and too sudden clutch action. With those changes, the bike would be not just fun to ride - it would be little short of brilliant.

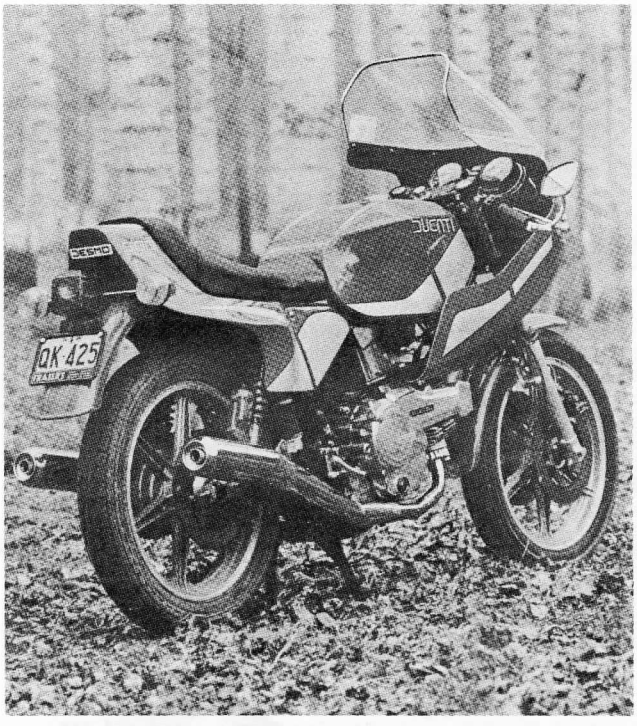
We'll keep our fingers crossed.

Final Two Cents Worth by U-no-hoo

? ..! ?

Ah, where is Joel...? Somebody go get that fool, he's on. Ah here he comes.

Ladies and gentlemen here is Joel.

Ah...yes, yes, fine article by Cycle World...on this Ducati Pantax..er Tampax,..?.. why do I have to do this I was watching the Dolphins Oh, alright.... whats that? Oh, oh, The following was from REVS a really fine Australian Motorcycle Publication, they should sell it in this country, they are really professional and first class, I love to read every free issue I get. I hope you all enjoyed it and you all that are coming to Daytona will get a chance to see one first hand. Thank You.

"Hey Thersdey, wanna go grab a pizza?"
"Quack wahck wkrwaak?
"Sure they have mushrooms.
"Kwack Whack kak?"
"Yeah, but you aint getting none, beer's no good for ducks.'