

SCOOP: Ducati's V4 For The Mid 80s

World Exclusive Pic Of Italian Sensation Engine

The following was borrowed from Bike magazine, a fine British motorcycle publication that has a excellent and professional team of journalists that dig hard to find what is new in the motorcycle world. Our thanks for this article.

R. P. McMurphy, Bike's man with the tongue like a silver-lined stream of pasta and a camera hand with quicker fingers than Rome's bun-pinchers, brought back this story from Bologna, norther Italy, home of the Ducati factory.

THE TIME: 5am. The place: a motorcycle factory. Rows of machine tools stand silently, squat and heavy, waiting to slice through chrome moly steel. The only sound is the drip of cutting oil.

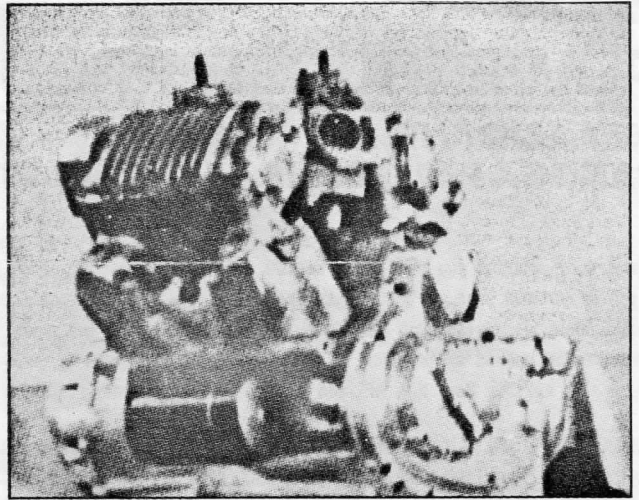
A security guard sleepily unlocks a door and the dignity of the factory is rudely shattered by thirty strident female voices discussing the previous evening's TV, their next door neighbour's spleen operation. The Shah of Iran's sex life and the price of carrots, all without pause for breath. The cleaners have arrived.

It could be anywhere, Hamimamatsu, Milwaukee, Munich, even Meriden, but no, the noise of these good ladies is truly phenomenal, it could only be Bologna - the Birmingham of Italy and home of Ducati Meccanica. One of the cleaners was a little less vocal than the others, barely twenty and very beautiful. She was filing in while her mother was in hospital, the money coming in useful during her first year at the university, reading Physics.. Physical she certainly was, her slim bronzed body had spend most of the previous night entwined in the slightly paler one of a half Irish journalist, her black eyes glinting as her long dark hair fell in cascades around her navel.

It was this journalist's Nikon that now lurked, wrapped in a plastic bag, in the bottom of her enamel bucket. Nervously she scuttled down the corridor, through the hanger-like development shop and paused before the double doors which bore only the legend "ENTRADA NON AUTORIZATTO E VIETATO" She spent an agonizing moment as another equally sleepy security guard unlocked the doors, but he stopped only to comment appreciatively upon her now heaving breasts. The room was long and low, with rows of drawing boards interspersed with plans chests making it seem cluttered. This was Ducati's central design office and at one end on a plinth was her objective.

She had seen it many times before but taken little interest, and now, having a closer look she wondered why her new found journalist friend was so excited about it. After all, it had a dull sandcast finish covered in brutal machining marks and splodges of marking blue. Nevertheless she unwrapped the heavy black camera, hoping desperately that she could remember how to twiddle the rings on the front so the picture was clear and the pointer in the view finder stayed horizontal.

The click as she took the first picture made her jump, but not as much as the bang of the door opening. She threw the camera into the bucket and turned. It was one of the long haired styling

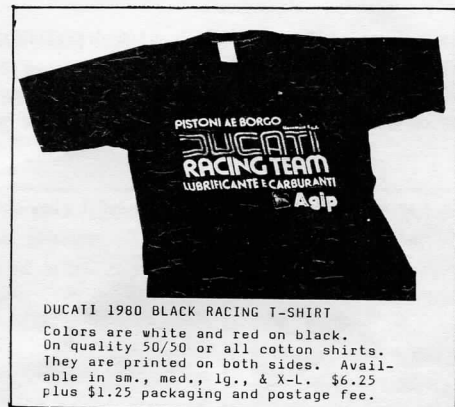


engineers who often came in early and always chattered her up. He hadn't seen the camera thank God but immediately allowed his thoughts to roam on why she was pale and trembling, coming, no less loudly, to the conclusion that it must be in anticipation of him sweeping her off her feet and making violent love to her behind the blue-print machine.

Regaining her composure, she told him to get stuffed, if he could remember how, and that she was merely startled by the door opening while looking at the engine. She carried on, rather too breathlessly, that they were covering certain aspects of internal combustion engine design at college and she wondered what was so special about this one. The stylist immediately seized upon the opportunity to display his prowess in technical jargon.

"This is, my dear, the engine that will tear apart the world of motorcycling in the eighties. It is a 90 degree watercooled V-4, possibly in a range of capacities from 750 to 1200cc with toothed belt drive to the camshaft which will either operate four valves per cylinder or be desmodromic or, if Ing Taglioni has his way, both.

The watercooling will enable it to be narrow and the rear head to be reversed to simplify intake and exhaust plumbing. It will also allow the 'V' to be more perpendicular making it easier to accommodate conventional float carbs at



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