

SINGLES Spot Cont.

brakes. Its low clip-on bars, rear-set pegs, long black saddle, and oversized brakes hint at the true purpose of the Diana. You push it off its center stand and roll it out onto the driveway. Straddle the black leather saddle and pull on the helmet. Now the goggles, snap the tab at the back of the helmet over the elastic strap and pull the green-tinted lenses down over your eyes. Pull on the leather gloves and cinch the wrist straps. You're ready. The big Veglia tach stares up at you like a huge, unblinking green eye. Turn the ignition on, open up the dual fuel petcocks, and reach down and prime the carb. The smell of high octane gasoline tells you that the float chamber is full. Pull the clutch lever in and flip the kick start out with your left foot. Work the starter through once. The 11:1 compression ratio makes it feel like a 750 twin rather than a 250 single. Try again, this time with some authority. Up on the kick starter, shift your weight to the left, and come down hard. Chumph wump! Again. Brupp, pop! It's ready to fire now. Careful on the throttle, you don't want to flood the engine. One more time, and ...rruppp, Brrrrroooooommm! The tach needle jumps to life. The roar of the megaphone exhaust rips the still morning air.

Ease off the throttle a bit....brumpp, brump, brumpp..not too much -- it won't idle yet, not until the oil is warmed up good. The steady thumping of the exhaust note mingles with the clatter of the valves, and the busy whirring of the camshaft. Your adrenalin starts to flow as the scent of the warm Castrol reaches you.

Tighten the chin strap of the helmet and zip up the jacket, while holding the throttle with your right hand, keeping the needle on the big Veglia tach hovering on the 2000 mark. You're ready. Clutch in, pull up with your right foot and feel it click into first gear. Ease out on the clutch as you feed the throttle, and you're off. Down the driveway, through a puddle at the curb, and turn onto the street.

The road is still damp but the sun is warming the black tarmac, causing whiffs of steam to rise like ghosts rising from the damp earth. Patches of sunlight filter through the bright spring green foliage of the big maples lining the road. Flecks of sunshine begin to accelerate toward you, and the white centerline ticks by ever faster as the throttle rolls open. Four thousand rpms, five, six, seven, eight.... Shift into second as the road rushes beneath you. The tires spin off a fine mist forming a roostertail in the wake of the Diana. The columns of trees fly by as you speed through the long, green tunnel formed above you. The boom of the exhaust echos off the pavement, reverberates among the trees and quickly fades behind you. Into third gear, and hunch down over the bright red fuel tank as the tach needle continues to climb. Eight, nine, ten-thousand rpms. Shift into fourth and wind it up again. Into fifth and heel the Diana over into a sweeping downhill lefthander. Everything feels right - steady as a rock - as you feel the left footpeg begin to scrape the pavement. Through the apex and out of the turn, into a long straightaway that is cracked and rippled from sun and frost. The firm suspension of the Diana soaks up the bumps but you feel the contour of everyone of them through the footpegs, seat and bars. The road smoothes out, so twist the righthand grip a bit more... the tach needle edges upward. The buzzing of the drivechain moves up half an octave, the booming of the exhaust takes on a higher pitch. Nine, ten thousand rpms in fifth.

The air blast if trying to pull you off the bike. Get down lower...your chin just over the fuel filtercap. Your hands and feet tingle with the resonance of the engine. Cold, morning air streaming by, the cacophony of mechanical noises ringing in

your ears, the feedback of the road through the short clip-on bars; going flat-out down a tree lined empty stretch of twisting two-lane blacktop - this is what the Diana was created for. Not commuting to the office or touring across the continent, but going all out; exploring the outer limits of man and machine.

All too soon you're approaching home. Ease off the throttle and just idle along in fifth gear to keep the noise down and the neighbors happy. Turn up the driveway and into the garage. Close the fuel petcocks, as the engine idles uneasily at 1000 rpms. Turn off the ignition. Silence. Pull off the goggles and helmet and just sit in the saddle a minute. Smell the hot Castrol oil and feel the waves of heat rising off the engine. Your ears still ring with the memory of the booming exhaust note. It's quiet now, only the ticking of the hot alloy engine as the metal cools in the damp morning air. Climb off and pull the Diana up on its centerstand. It's time to go to work now. But tomorrow morning, just as the sky is lightening, you'll be out in the garage again, pulling on the gloves and buckling the faded red helmet. Until then, the Diana will sit quietly in the corner of the garage....waiting.



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