

TRAVELS

The Champion distributor in Chambersburg couldn't supply plugs for the Duke, but a local Suzuki dealer produced the NGK equivalent. The chap seemed unenthusiastic about an RE5 model on display, but spoke highly of his water-cooled 750 - said with a fairing it did 115 mph easily. I noticed the nearly bald tire and wondered why he didn't.

Gettysburg had too many sights to absorb for a rider only passing through. I learned more about the battle from the illuminated map presentation in a half-hour than I had picked up from Bruce Catton in several volumes. I ate lunch and wrote some postcards at the site of Lincoln's address. And was approached by a professor planning a sabbatical trip across Canada by motorcycling. I asked him what kind of machine he owned, and he said he didn't. So I asked what he had ridden, and he said he hadn't, but would be glad to have my recommendation. Clearly, his approach was academic.

The Ducati gas tank provides about 140 miles worth before reaching reserve level - about 50-55 miles per Imperial gallon (divide by 5 and multiply by four to get the U.S. equivalent). This makes for a break about the time one is welcome. Almost invariably the Italian angle-iron is the topic of conversation with station attendants. I was accustomed to that in Canada, but somehow expected eastern U.S. gasoline jockeys to be more blase, or more familiar with the Duke. Not so. And I did not see another Ducati, or a dealer, in five days to Virginia and back. It was nice to be exclusive and I hoped nothing broke.

I reached Front Royal Tuesday mid-afternoon and paid the southbound toll within minutes to start the 100-mile Skyline Drive run which was the trip's main objective. At the first roadside overlook, I stopped for a snack, topped up the crankcase with BG 20-40 and changed plugs. In the half hour or better I was stopped, I gradually became aware of a phenomenon which was repeated by most visitors. The car, or camper, or whatever, would stop and tourists emerge to look across the blue vista of the steamy Shenandoah Valley. In most cases, in most cases, the vehicle's engine was left running and often a door or two were left ajar while people in a hurry peered through binoculars or camera view-finders, anxious to be on their way to somewhere else. Where is the human race going, that it's in such a helluva hurry?

About 20 miles into Shenandoah National Park I spent the night in Matthews Arm campground, complete with asphalt-surfaced, one-way access roads. Like most camping areas I saw, this one was designed more for travel trailers and mobile homes, than for tenters seeking grassy areas. I shaped a base of dry leaves before erecting my tent. The leaves, along with a plastic foam pad and sleeping bag, created a passably smooth though firm surface. During the evening I chatted with a father and son fleeing what the boy termed "wall-to-wall people" in New Jersey, and with a young couple travelling two-up on a Honda 750 with cooking equipment as well as clothing and other gear for extended touring. I wished again I had been able to obtain a luggage rack compatible with the Duke's seat, which slides off to the rear for removal.

About 3 am Wednesday, I was awakened, and lay listening, half-asleep, as trash-can lids were wrenched off nearby containers and deposited on the ground with a clatter. I drifted back to sleep, to learn after sun-up that a marauding black bear had been responsible for the disturbance.

My neighbor said she and her husband had both been thinking about, "That man out on the ground with a bear around." That was nice of them.

The next 80 miles were left, right, up and down - sweeping, soaring changes of direction through scenic greenery. Fourth gear seemed best for the constant switches and the 35mph limit. I stopped to walk a mile along a section of the Appalachian Trail and saw dozens of hikers along the Skyline Drive who were covering a good deal more of it.

When I reached the end of the Drive I was glad enough to travel straight and level Interstate 64 east to Charlottesville, then U.S. 29 north to Gainesville, Va., to a campground. These were the first sections of controlled-access, multi-lane highway I had been on for any distance in the U.S.

I found the 55 mph limit generally better observed on these flat throughways in Virginia than on hilly two-lane highways in Pennsylvania. Traffic was lighter and generally less hectic than on Ontario's 70 mph multi-lane roads. (Ontario dropped this limit to 60 mph early in 1976, which should make motorcycling more comfortable.) I found unnerving some of the rain grooves on U.S. roads and all of the bridges surfaced with metal grillwork.

The proprietor of the Gainesville campground reported he'd been to Florida and back by Full-dresser a month before. Hawgs don't appeal to me; there's something about their bulk and weight I dislike. And the oddly timed exhaust pulses are reminiscent of a Fargo truck I drove which had badly burned valves. But I acknowledge the attraction the close-coupled twin clearly holds for many bikers, and accept the likelihood that my negative prejudice is no more reasonable than their positive bias. To each his own.

DUCATI

SCUDERIA N.C.R.



ROAD RACING TEAM

NCR ROAD RACING T-SHIRT

A limited amount of these shirts have been commissioned for overseas shipments. We have them for sale through the club for a limited time only. Shirt is Hanes white with red ringers, red, navy blue and sky blue colors used. It is a beautiful shirt that stands out of the crowd of mediocre shirts you see for other brands. Price is \$6.95 plus \$1.50 shpg and handling, Canada add 20% overseas shipping is \$3.10 air mail.

I'D RATHER BE RIDING MY DUCATI

DUCATI CAR TAG

Made of metal, not plastic with black pinstriping, red I'D RATHER BE RIDING MY and black DUCATI lettering. Great for meeting other Ducati owners when you are out on your truck or car. Let those other jerks know you have some class, you ride a Ducati. \$3.50 with shipping included. A fund raiser for the club. Price is in US funds Canadians add 20% overseas add \$1.50 extra for shipping air mail. Mail check or MO to DIOC.