

# LETTERS

## HAVING A GOOD IDEA OF HOW LONG THINGS SHOULD LAST

Hi Joel,

When I read the letter from Adrian S. Palmer, his comments motivated me enough to write this note to you.

I have worked for over 10 years as an import car mechanic at our dealership and have followed the lifespan of many cars from new to junkyard. We have gone through factory changes and the usual modernization of the product line up through this 10 years of my employment. I have a pretty good idea of how long things should last. What I am getting at is --- why will people buy an expensive 2 wheeler just to have to tear it down at 400 miles and do to the valve train things that I hear of doing only on all out racing machines? Is all that "Shot paning, hard chrome, dry lube, and replacing of valve guides necessary?"

Why do factories sell such inadequate machines as far as the reliability factor goes? This sort of inadequacy in engineering is what killed the British car and bike industries. Mr. Palmer, himself, stated how well that Honda performed - "hassle-free" to quote the man. More people have bought Japanese motorcycles because of that. They don't need piles of extra funds to correct errors or inadequacies of the product just to ride it.

This problem was staring me in the fact for many years now. I know of more people who have bought Jap bikes and just rode them. I have heard of people buying English bikes and not being able to get home due to electrical failures on a new machine. The reliability of these things has always been a joke. What with "Mr. Lucas" - the inventor of the intermittent electron.

My bike, a 1973 450 Mark III with a conventional valve train was a disappointment to me after a short while. When I realized that it would never go as fast as comparable sized machines on the highway because it was geared too drun low. The thing came with a 12 tooth countershaft sprocket. I could go trail riding with it, with clip-ons yet.

By reading the DIOC newsletter I cam across the fact that Duc parts has other sprockets available; so I ordered a 14 tooth and geared up the thing. Checking my owners manual, it seems that the way it is supposed to be - what a mistake. Redline at 6500 rpm and only going 65 mph or so. Tell me that isn't stupid. The 250 Duc Diana could go 100 mph. I bought the 450 because I liked singles, and wanted to follow up on the Matchless 500 I owned two years previously.

The DIOC newsletter also opened my eyes to the electrical woes of Ducatis that I never realized. I thought all bikes had dim lights. The Japanese put better electrical equipment on their machines years ago, yet the Duc people were putting a 25 watt headlight in the likes of my 450. Totally inadequate and dangerous. I since have put in a 45 watt Cibie unit. It's not a quartz iodine unit because 6 volt is not available in quartz. But 45 watt tungsten is better than 25 watts.

The good thing about my bike; (there has to be at least one, right?) is that the motor and trans hasn't been opened up yet, and shouldn't be for a while. It only has 18,000 miles so far. If the Honda 750-4 can go over 50,000 miles reliably, why not my machine?? Unless of course some Italian underengineered the sucker?

Joel, please reply in writing to the following:

Do the Duc twins really have that poor a valve guide and rocker arm system? Also, what materials are they made up of?

Is the gear ratio of my 450 normal for the North American market? Bearing in mind it is equipped with what some consider small valves and a small carb (29mm Del) it should do close to 100 mph - right?

(Note on the sprocket change, my gas mileage went up from the advertised 45 mpg to 75 mpg. I liked that).

I would one day like to own a 750 Duc to enjoy the greater power over the 450, but if they have such poor top ends, it wouldn't be worth buying a used one because of the way they are. Anyway it was a thought. They sure look good though.

Must close now. If you wish to comment on any of the other garbage I wrote - please do so.

Enclosed please find a money order to cover all postage, etc - like paper or beer.

M.Baraschuk, B0x 758, Stonewall, Manitoba, Canada R0C 2Z0

## A TRIFLE LONG, CONFUSING...???????

Dear Sir: Recently, at the only-nationally-scheduled-California-motorcycle-road-race, I met a gent wearing a Stanley Michael Bailey Hailwood, M.B.E., Isle of Man t-shirt. He mentioned that, possibly I might locate one thru your club. (Sorry about the delay.)

I have a friend who would, quite probably, reverse directions in daily worship for ownership of said shirt. Enclosed you'll find a personal money order for \$10.00 to hopefully cover costs.

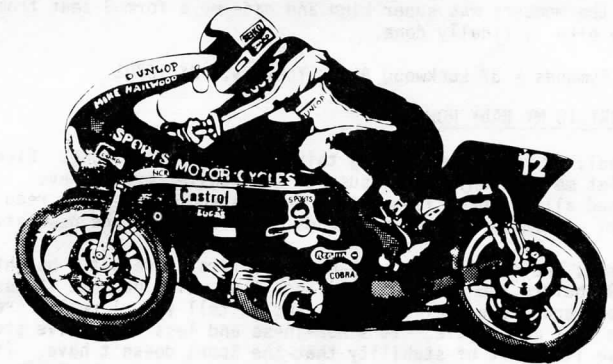
Please mail a large size to: Steve Lawrence, 1238 Reed Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin 54303. If you have no large sizes, send an extra-large. If you have no extra-large, send a medium. If you can't send the shirt to Mr. Lawrence, send it to me, and I'll see that he gets it.

If you don't have the shirt but know where to find one, inform me of this location. If there is any currency remaining after sending the shirt, try to buy yourself a well deserved drink with what ever is left over. If there are insufficient funds, bill me. If you can't bill me, return the money order in the self addressed stamped envelope and I'll re-issue another in the correct amount (if you let me know what it is.) If you can't return the money order, consider it a donation for some future engagement of Dr. Taglioni at one of your American national meetings, and, by cutting the stamp from the stamped envelope and applying glue, utilize it on some future correspondence. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

If you found this letter a trifle long, confusing, and/or boring, my apologies. Thank you.

Brian T. Dougherty, 131 Third Street, Windsor, CA 95492

## DUCATI 900 WORLD CHAMPION



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