

# on the cover

## MOMENTS WITH A HAILWOOD REPLICA

BY PETE BONNER

On the wall I can see the postcard from the club requesting a 8X12 action photo of my Replica. Riding is easy but to get a good picture required another person who was handy with a camera. Last month my old friend Fred Mork arrived from Berkeley, California so we went riding and too some pictures. The resulting 8X12 (on the cover of this issue) was cropped from a picture Fred took of me at a place called Juan Tabo Picnic Grounds.

The road to the Tabo Picnic Grounds is a good uphill grade with all corners in it—very little straightaways. The road really favors a small light bike as too much power tends to be unusable. Until last Sunday I had never run across a bike rider that even came close to keeping up with the Replica. However last Sunday I met a fellow on a Yamaha RD 400 who was the fastest rider I'd met yet. The RD nas souped up with speed parts and modified for fast riding with good tires etc. so it was really competitive.

The RD rider's name is Brian. We decided to go at it a bit and match our skills in some competitive racing on this lonely stretch of road. Three times we went off, the first time I led going downhill and Brian on his RD was unable to pass but remained fairly close -- I only had a 100 foot lead at the bottom of the six-mile or so road, although I could have stretched it further.

Talking to Brian at the bottom of the hill he admitted he'd gone a bit wider on the turns than I since I don't like to stray into the path of oncoming traffic. After resting and talking we went back uphill. This time Brian was in the lead but before we were halfway I thought I had a chance to pass so I hit the throttle and was pulling up next to Brian when I noticed some traffic coming down - and I was in their lane. Applying the brakes put the rear end in a slide which helped me scrub off some speed. However, Brian slowed down as he thought I was in trouble since the rear was sliding. I felt that that gave me the room needed so I released the brakes and the Duke immediately straightened out and poured the gas to it and went around the surprised RD. Maintaining and building a bit of a lead. I arrived at the top with a comfortable margin. As we talked awhile at the top some 4-banger Jap riders showed up including a 550 and 1100 Gpz's. On the last run going down, the four banger boys said they'd like to get in on the action too. We started down with the RD in front, then the Duke followed by the four bangers. Brian got behind another bike going down so we all followed for a bit because of the blind corners. Finally Brian found the perfect place to pass so that he got by but the rest of us were stuck. Shortly after, I managed to pass before the GPz ate my taillight, which he seemed ready to do. Flying downhill I managed to catch the RD just as he was passing another car, so I passed it too. Really moving now, the difference in power was minimized by the steepish grade and brakes and cornering became the most important things. To my surprise the Duke was actually better in the turns than the lighter Yamaha. About two thirds of the way down, I managed to pass the RD and lead him to the end of the road.

At the bottom of the road, Brian and I had a pleasant chat for a few minutes before the Jap "Superbikes" arrived. After re-grouping, we all took off for the other side of the mountain except for Brian on the RD as he had to go to work.

There was a new nicely paved wide road on the way. Brian was still with us as it was on his way home - and when we would start from a stoplight, he would get moving then pop a wheelie and go. I wouldn't bother slipping the clutch, just rolllllllll the big Duke on from 2,000 RPM. The third time we did this, I noticed that the GPz 1100 had gone off with us. I was at 2,000 RPM when I noticed the Kawasaki taking off. Still I just rolled it on although he was really screaming out of the hole, despite a passenger on the back - perhaps an extra 120lbs, the big Kaw got the jump but once the Duke hit about 3500 RPM it became a dead heat up to about 130 mph! At that point, we were approaching an intersection and I had no desire to splatter myself

against a car so I shut down. I was wound up fairly tight in fourth and still had a gear left so I figure in the appropriate place with no cross traffic I might have taken him in top end due to the better streamlining of the Duke. Anyway, the Duke was never meant to be a Kansas roadracer like the big Jap bikes. The fact that it was doing so well at pure acceleration meant I was pleased to find that a 120 lb weight handicap was enough to equalize the two bikes in pure dragstrip acceleration. Hence my new motto - "Bored by Superbikes? Step up to a Formula 1 - Ride a Ducati."

As you all can see I am very excited with my Hailwood Replica and I think this is the most exhilarating motorcycle I've ever ridden. My first new bike in 1964 was a Ducati 250 scrambler and I thought it was really neat but this

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Replica really takes the cake. The bike is essentially a 900SS with stock 40mm carbs, Conti mufflers with slightly different cams and compression ratio. The rear shocks are an inch and half longer than stock SSs. The fairing is of course different than the 900SS. Yet anybody could put an upgrading kit in their 900SS and get virtually the same performance - in fact - better - since I am still running the stock Michelin M-45 tires and they have a tendency to slide around corners. With proper tires the handling and cornering should improve considerably, yet even as is, the Hailwood Replica is more than a match for anything on the road - except another Replica. But mine was one of five 1982 models that Berliner got, so I'm not likely to meet another one any time soon. I am looking forward many happy years with my Ducati. We are quite fortunate that someone still builds motorcycles that are as exciting as this Replica.

*Eds Notes: Pete mentioned the fact that Michelin M-45s slide around corners. I have heard this quite a few times and have determined that 8 out of 10 people feel that is so, me included. I had a set on my 900 SS and I took them off and replaced them with Pirelli Phantoms. If any of you folks have any comments to make on Michelin tires, we would like to hear from you. We would also like to know what kind of tires you are presently using and how you like them and why. We would for you to write your comments on a sheet of paper, and title it "TIRES SURVEY". I would appreciate it if you would not include your comments in the body of a letter dealing with a different subject, or on the back of an order form. We have a hired typist and we would just like to give her the material and have it typed up directly without having to weed out other matters not pertinent to the SURVEY. Your participation in this SURVEY is appreciated and needed so please get involved. Joel.*

