

46 M.P.H.—105 M.P.G.—FROM THE SPORTY LITTLE ITALIAN

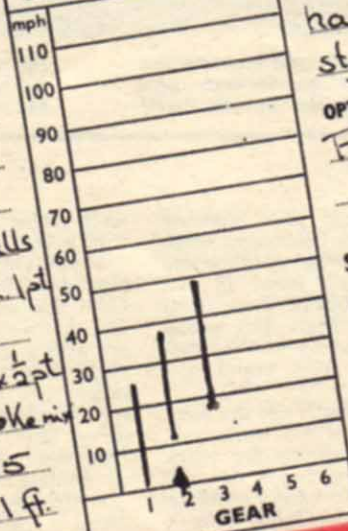
DUCATI 50

MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS ROAD TEST No. 67
 Vehicle Ducati Sport 48 Price new £89.19.6
 Engine 48cc two-stroke 4.2 bhp at 8600 rpm
 Gearbox three-speed, twist-grip handchange
 Final drive Chain

GENERAL INFORMATION

Weight 119 lbs
 Saddle height 2ft. 6ins
 Turning circle 11ft 2ins
 Is toolbox lockable No
 Is steering lockable No
 Fuel tank capacity 2.2 galls
 Reserve capacity approx. 1pt
 Oil tank capacity —
 Gearbox capacity approx. 1/2 pt
 Fuel specified two-stroke mix
 Overall consumption 105
 Braking from 30 mph 31 ft
 Acceleration 0-60 mph 14 secs

SPEEDS IN GEARS



EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

STANDARD FITTINGS Clip-On handlebars, racing style dual seat
 OPTIONAL EXTRAS Fairing, touring handlebars

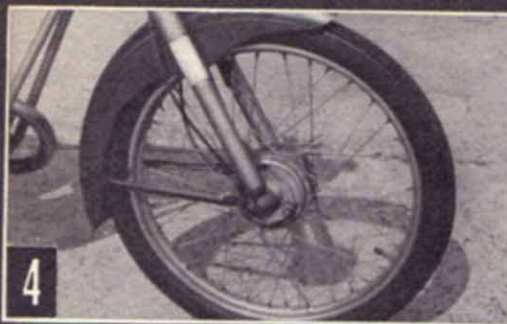
SPARES PRICES

Engine gasket set 5s 0d
 Set valves & guides —
 Piston with rings £1 12s 0d
 Set of clutch plates 13s 1d
 Silencer £2. 13s 0d
 Pr Exchange brake shoes 10s 0d

RATING CHART

(points out of 10)

Control positioning and adjustment	6
Extra Instruments and equipment	0
Fuel reserve and tap operation	8
Ease of starting	8
Engine smoothness	9
Quietness of engine & transmission	6
Gearbox and clutch operation	7
Road holding	8
Braking efficiency	8
Comfort and ease of handling	7
Lighting efficiency	6
Stand operation	6
Tool kit	4
Overall finish	8
General performance & reliability	8
TOTAL (maximum points 150)	99



DUCATI is a name associated with sporty Italian lightweight motorcycles. Normally, they are overhead camshaft four-stroke models, but the baby in their range, the Sport 48 is the exception to the rule. It is powered by a 48 c.c. two-stroke 3-speed gearbox unit construction engine.

However, Ducati appear to make two-strokes as excellent as four-strokes, for the power produced from the egg-cup sized unit is quite surprising. The motor itself is quite flexible and the machine may be driven at walking pace in first gear.

Similar to many fifties, one's first impression is of instability. The steering seems exceptionally light and one tends to wander off course when caught by an unexpected side-wind. Bumps in the road also give a similar sensation. However, once one becomes accustomed to the lightness of the machine, it is possible to run rings around the larger capacity models in traffic and on corners.

Sporty not Comfortable

As the name implies, the Ducati Sport 48 is an out and out sports bike. It has clip-on handlebars, racing type seat and a down-draught, bell-mouth sports' carburetter. Although the engine is capable of pulling two people, pillion footrests are not fitted. Riding comfort isn't one of the machine's finer points, as the saddle, similar to most Italian makes, is rather narrow and hard. However, apart from this, the riding position is comparable to that of the majority of sports machines.

With a top speed in the region of 46 miles-an-hour, the small full-width hub brakes proved adequate. The back wheel could be locked quite easily, although the front would only attempt to do the same on a damp road.

Lighting was also adequate for performance, although being direct, no parking or stoplights were provided. The horn seemed rather feeble and at low engine revs would hardly do credit to an angry wasp.

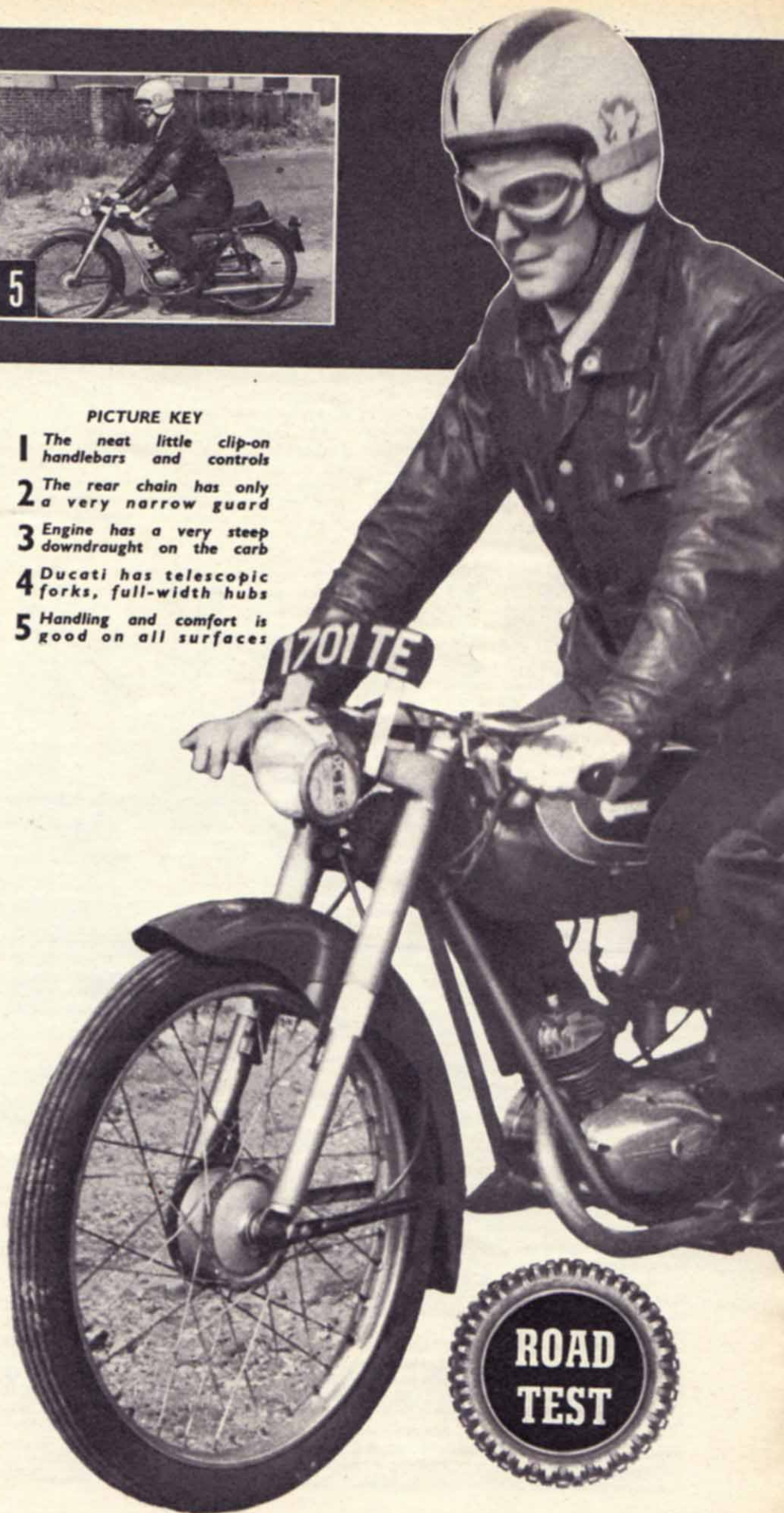
One of the problems when riding small capacity machines, is that one often finds that on a standing start from the traffic lights, one usually has a bus or car hammering along close to your back wheel. However, this lack of acceleration doesn't apply to the Ducati. Its three-speed gearbox was fitted with well-chosen ratio cogs and one could keep up with much of the traffic on acceleration.

The twist-grip gearchange operated quite smoothly, although it was possible to slip between the gears into false neutrals if care wasn't taken in selection. Going up through the box it wasn't found necessary to operate the

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PICTURE KEY

- 1** The neat little clip-on handlebars and controls
- 2** The rear chain has only a very narrow guard
- 3** Engine has a very steep downdraught on the carb
- 4** Ducati has telescopic forks, full-width hubs
- 5** Handling and comfort is good on all surfaces



**ROAD
TEST**

10 Minute Tips

BATTERY CHARGING If you are the owner of a Villiers-powered 2T or 3T bike, here is a simple method to boost your battery up when it is flat. Simply remove the headlight-rim and disconnect the main beam wire, and the pilot bulb wire, put the main beam wire in the pilot bulb holder. When you have your lights on, use the pilot bulb as much as you can, and your battery will soon be charged up owing to the high output from your alternator. It's only a few minutes' job to change the wires back when your battery is fully charged.—M. GARNER, LEICESTER.

RETIMING TIP *When retiming the ignition on a machine fitted with a magneto, it is useful if the magneto can be locked in such a position that the points are just opening. I recently achieved this very simply by removing the body earthing brush and inserting a small piece of a plastic clothes line in the brush holder screwing it back into the magneto so that it held the armature firmly. Extreme accuracy can be obtained by lightly tapping the C.B. points end of the armature to get them just opening.*—K. WIGLEY, RHONDDA.

LAMBRETTA IGNITION SWITCH Lambretta owners may be interested in the way I fitted an ignition switch to my machine. First of all remove the earthing wire from the ignition coil, then take a wire from this terminal, following the rest of the wiring past the back of the headlamp. Next remove the cut-out button and fit in its place a car type ignition switch which can be bought including lock and keys for under £1. Connect the wire to one of the terminals on this and connect the other one to the frame.—J. CARPENTER, BURBAGE.

CARDBOARD BOLT HOLDER *When removing a primary or timing case cover where the screws are of differing lengths, cut a piece of cardboard the same shape as the cover and make holes to correspond with those of the cover. As you take a screw out of the cover, put it in its corresponding hole in the cardboard. You can then put each screw back into the hole it came out of when reassembling. Also, all screws are in cardboard and do not get lost.*—C. ROBERTS, HORWICH.

FILTER CLEANED The air filter on a Bantam D3 can be cleaned more thoroughly by filling a polythene washing up liquid container with petrol, and squirting the petrol into the air filter. The dirt is forced out easily by the force of the jet.—K. HOLMES, WIRRAL.

SS90 ROAD TEST

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and found there to be a great improvement. The riding position was more normal and, in fact, this gave the rider greater confidence on the bends.

Handling was one of the BSA's strong points—it was so light that it could be flipped over till the footrest grounded on almost any sharp corner. It was shod with new-type Dunlop tyres and there was never even the faintest suggestion of either the back or front breaking away while cranked over.

Braking was another feature of the SS90 which appealed to us—the bike could be brought to a halt from 30 m.p.h. in 28 ft. without a trace of a skid or wobble.

Despite its close-ratio gearbox, the BSA was great fun to use in traffic—a little intelligent use of the clutch to aid the already quite flexible motor was the only special technique needed. Thanks to its light weight and slim build

the bike could be whistled in and out of heavy traffic with no trouble at all and the superb brakes added to the rider's confidence during rush-hour riding.

The only thing we really disliked about the engine was the vibration which set in towards the end of the rev-range. Something that seems unfortunately common even on modern motorcycles.

Suspension-wise the BSA was near-perfect—the heavyweight forks and cradle frame—with duplex bottom-tubes and swinging arm rear gave a firm ride and the large dual seat looked after the rider's comfort.

The only thing which really made our testers swear—especially the one who had to push the bike for a couple of miles—was the fact that the BSA lacks a reserve tap. This or a fuel gauge is something that we consider essential on any motorcycle, scooter or moped.

All things considered, however, the BSA came through our test remarkably well. It proved to have few vices and lots of nice points which should appeal to all riders.

The 350 c.c. Gold Star may have gone but it has quite a worthy successor. ●

DUCATI TEST

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clutch, and although you could use the same method coming down, it isn't advisable if you hope to obtain a useful life from your engine unit.

One of the beauties of owning a 50 c.c. bike is that you put a gallon of petrol in the tank and don't bother to fill up again for a week or so. The Sport 50 averaged around 105 m.p.g. and that included some fairly hard riding. One unfortunate

comment we have to make about the carburation is the lack of air filter/silencer.

The induction roar seemed ten times louder than the exhaust note which was subdued and pleasant under all circumstances. The only way you could keep the carburettor quiet was to use a very gentle hand on the throttle control.

Generally speaking, the Ducati Sport 50 is an economical sports lightweight, which is very reasonably priced and, although it has some utility qualities, is reasonable value for money. It is ideal for the youngster who requires his "first" machine to be cheap, economical and yet sporty. ●

STRAIGHT from the SADDLE

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the right—no signal either by hand or winker. I was almost ready for him, but we met quite solidly and bounced off each other. Actually, I did the bouncing while he swung back to his left side. Somehow I stayed on, which was miraculous. Waving my hand at him to indicate he hadn't made a signal I went on. He was obviously as shaken as I was and recriminations would have achieved nothing.

Later, discussing this with Barry Ryerson and recognising the fact that much of the trouble which strikes motorcyclists occurs when someone is making a right turn, Barry advanced the theory that while cars astern may be clearly visible in their mirrors to drivers about to make right turns, motorbikes are not. His view is that the overtaking rider is not seen in the split second glance that a driver gives his mirror just before making his turn. There may well be something in that idea.

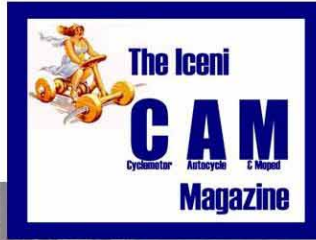
I believe that many drivers make hundreds of right turns perfectly safely and

then suffer a moment's distraction or absent-mindedness and do a turn without looking. Often they get away with it, but just now and then there is someone about to overtake and bingo! Another statistic joins the crowd. Just three weeks ago I was following a car which turned right in the most orderly and dignified manner at slow speed after the driver had made an immaculate hand signal. Unfortunately, he didn't take into account a car coming the other way and there was a head-on smash.

What happened? It was broad daylight, visibility was perfect, these two cars were the only ones moving for hundreds of yards either way. There is only one explanation and that was that the driver of the car turning right just didn't register the car coming the other way. After a while one develops an instinct for avoiding situations like this where a crash can result. I think motorcyclists are the most acute of all road users in this respect and cultivate a sixth sense, whether consciously or not, which helps them to see the possibilities and so to avoid them.

There's no doubt that, used properly, a motorcycle can be one of the safest vehicles on the roads in present traffic conditions. ●

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