

Road Tests of New Models

Moto-Guzzi 65

A Diminutive Italian Machine of Outstanding All-round Performance for Its Size

SMALLEST-capacity, fully-fledged, large-production motor cycle in the world, the Italian Moto-Guzzi 65 has a range of usefulness that belies its engine size. The combination of an efficient power unit, a three-speed gear box and light weight, make the machine a thoroughly practical little motor cycle, not only for runabout purposes, but also for far more ambitious journeys.

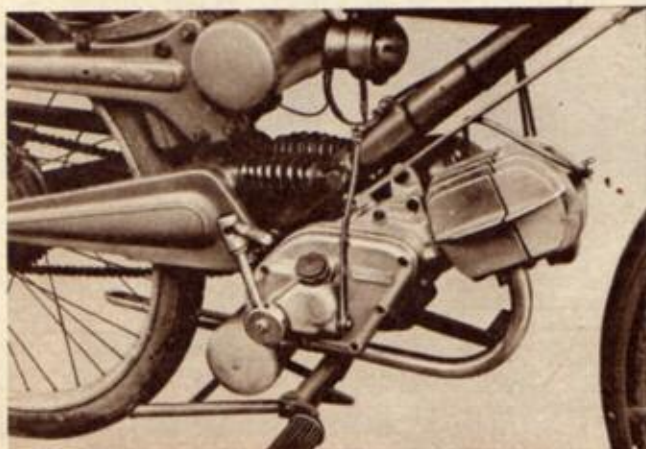
Though of small overall dimensions, the Guzzi provides a commanding, man-size riding position that would do credit to many larger machines. This results from a combination of 30-inch saddle height, relatively low footrests, and a handlebar shape which gives a natural grip angle. The machine handles extraordinarily well, steers to a hair's breadth and, in virtue of its low weight, can be "thrown about" in complete safety.

The parallel-ruler type front fork has an adequate range of movement and the rear-springing is soft enough to absorb even minor road irregularities. On the machine under test proprietary friction dampers were fitted to the rear suspension, though these were loosened off to make them ineffective. The need for dampers was never felt and throughout the performance range on a variety of road surfaces the standard of road holding and comfort was of a very high order.

For cold-engine starting two or three digs on the starter pedal were required; a first-kick start was usual when the engine was hot. Mild piston slap ceased when the engine had been running for a few minutes to warm up, and it then idled reliably and with no undue four-stroking; the pick-up on opening the throttle was brisk and without hesitation. There is only slight noise increase at wide throttle openings over the pleasant, musical exhaust whisper heard at idling speeds.

Though the clutch gave all the indications of freeing readily and fully, it was difficult to avoid a slight "scrunch" when engaging bottom gear with the machine stationary and the engine ticking-over. Operation of the clutch by means of a full-size handlebar lever was finger light and the clutch took up the drive easily and smoothly. The gear-change lever is situated on the right-hand side and just in front of the fuel tank, where it is well clear of the rider's knee, yet readily to hand. Changes could be made quickly and with little chance of missing the gear ratio required.

A very slight whine was audible in second gear at lowish speeds, but bottom gear (and, of course, the direct-drive top) and the helical primary drive from the engine to the gear box were noiseless. The brakes were outstandingly effective—light in operation, progressive in action, and capable of stopping the machine in



Engine-gear unit is notably accessible. Twin coil springs control the pivoting-fork rear suspension

almost unbelievably short distances; for example, in 22 feet from 25 m.p.h. In addition, when maximum braking was applied at high or low speeds the Guzzi remained completely stable.

The quiet liveliness of the engine, the good handling, the comfortable riding position, and the feeling of absolute command it engendered, combined to make the Guzzi a first-rate machine for traffic work. A speed of 25 m.p.h. from rest could be reached with a slickness comparable with average four-wheel vehicles, so that in built-up areas one could remain comfortably with the rest of the traffic.

On out-of-town roads an effortless cruising speed was between 25 and 30 m.p.h., with considerably higher speeds practicable in only slightly favourable conditions. For example, on two occasions with a barely perceptible tail wind on level roads speeds of over

INFORMATION PANEL

SPECIFICATION: Guzzi 65 c.c. (42 x 46 mm) two-stroke engine with three-speed gear in unit and helical-pinion primary drive. Detachable light-alloy cylinder head and light-alloy cylinder barrel with liner. Crankshaft mounted in phosphor-bronze and roller bearings; needle-roller big-end bearing. Flat-top light-alloy piston. Induction controlled by crankshaft valve. Gear-change by hand lever. Petrol lubrication, ratio 20 to 1. Tank capacity, 1½ gallons. Dellorto carburettor with lever air and throttle controls; air filter. Marelli flywheel magneto with lighting coils. Link-action front fork and pivoting rear suspension. Pirelli 26 x 1½ x 2in tyres. Overall gear ratios 26.6, 17.4 and 10.2 to 1. Saddle height, 30in unladen. Wheelbase, 47in. Weight as tested with tools and 1 gallon fuel, 126lb.

PETROL CONSUMPTION: Approximately 100 m.p.g. under hard riding conditions.

PRICE: £95, including import duty and Purchase Tax.

MAKERS: Moto-Guzzi, S.A., Mandello del Lario, Como, Italy. Concessionaires in Great Britain: Bob Foster, 472-4, Ashley Road, Parkstone, Dorset.

35 m.p.h. were maintained for lengthy periods; although engine r.p.m. were well over 5,500, there was no trace of vibration nor any manifestation of over-driving.

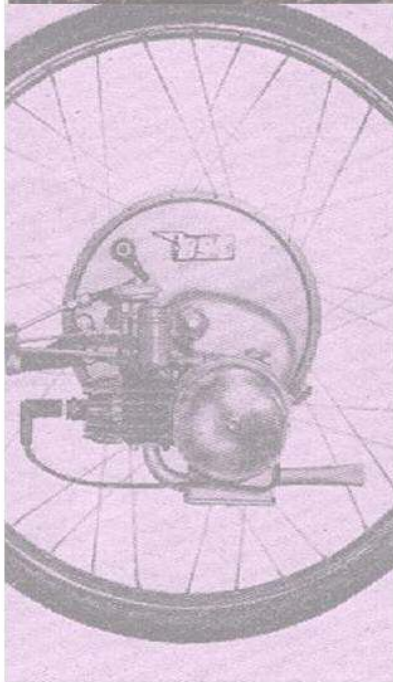
As might be expected, adverse winds and hills took their toll of the performance. In such circumstances one had the option of making good use of the gear box or letting the engine slog in top gear (assuming the gradient was not too severe), which it would do very happily and comparatively powerfully in the manner of two-strokes. A gradient that would defeat the Guzzi in bottom gear would rarely be encountered in hilly country given a modicum of forethought in route selection.

For experiment, the 1 in 5½ gradient of Pebblecombe Hill, Surrey, was tackled and surmounted with 18 unhurried "foots" while the engine pulled steadily in bottom gear. This was a good test because the hill is lengthy and, because bottom gear had to be engaged before the steepest part was encountered there was no possibility of the performance being falsified by rushing tactics. In full wet-weather riding gear, including waders, the rider's weight was 13-stone.

Fuel consumption under fairly hard riding conditions worked out at about 100 m.p.g. The fact is that the "big-machine" feel of the Guzzi, coupled with its many other attributes, tends to encourage full use of its performance—hence the "hard riding."

Finish of the 65 is in the well-known Guzzi red enamel, with chromium plate for the handlebar and controls, exhaust pipe, wheel rims and lamp rims. There is a useful parcels grid on the tank-top and a sturdy carrier on the rear mudguard.

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