

ROAD TEST REPORT

75c.c. BIANCHI "GARDENA"

WHETHER it was the bright red, or the "racy look," or the general design which made people look at us, we don't know. On the A5 lorry drivers peered out of their cabs down onto us; at the traffic lights passers-by lingered awhile and stared; when left by itself the *Gardena* was soon surrounded by admiring people. Young and old showed more than just a passing interest in the machine.

The *Gardena* is a motor cycle with footrests and no pedals and it gives one the immediate feeling that it is safe and sure. Braking is good and steering is excellent, and being light in weight the model can be man-handled with great ease. But, as might be expected with a mere 75 c.c. engine, some intelligent usage must be made with what power is available when overtaking and gradient climbing.

The steering is light and very responsive and perhaps the ribbed front tyre helps create the feeling that one could steer to a hair line. Springing, which is telescopic front and swing arm rear, is on the hard side, and bumps were noticeably passed on to the rider through the narrow hard dual seat. The large tank with 3-position fuel tap is nicely designed so that one's knees fitted snugly onto it.

The engine is an inclined 2-stroke mounted into the all welded pressed steel beam constructed frame. It develops 3.5 b.h.p. at maximum revs of 7,000. Ignition and lighting is by flywheel mag.-dyno. with 17-watt output from the *Marelli* unit. There are three rubber bushed suspension points securing the *Bianchi* engine to the frame. A multi-disc clutch runs in oil and transmission is by primary direct drive with final drive by chain. handlebars. The rear brake is oper-

ated by a pedal on the right which is very much like the ordinary foot gear change pedal on m/c gearboxes.

On the left hand side of the crankcase, is the forward kicking starter pedal. On either side of the frame, below the dual-seat are two shallow covers fastening directly onto the frame by screwed fastener which are tool boxes. The three-speed gearbox is controlled by left hand twist grip with clutch lever. The speedometer is mounted into the headlamp below which is fitted the electric horn. Footrests are fitted near the rear wheel spindle. The front mudguard is shallow sectioned and the rear one is valanced. Rider footrests are adjustable to some degree.

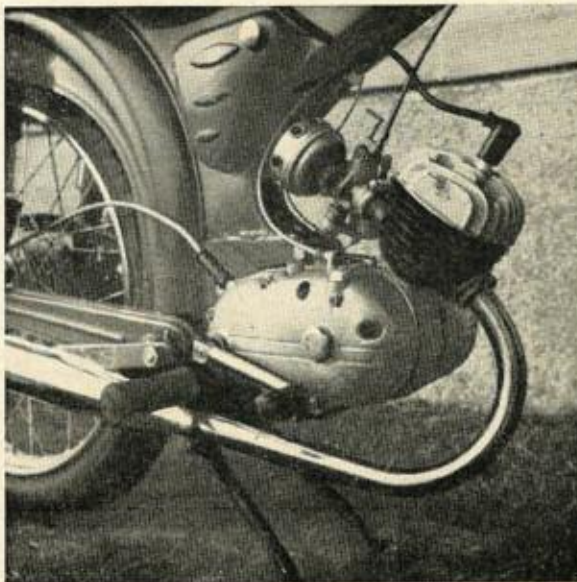
Easy Handling

The great charm of this *Gardena* is its willingness and delightful handling qualities. Top speeds are not great, but it was possible to touch 50 m.p.h. (speedo reading) under favourable conditions, although about 45 m.p.h. seemed its normal maximum. In 1st gear there is a tendency to rev noisily up to about peak revs but once the machine was moving, 1st gear was not really necessary—the engine pulling nicely at walking speed.

From a standing start on an officially marked 1 in 12 hill, the *Gardena* just about managed to crawl up to the summit in top gear with engine obviously labouring. In 2nd gear, the hill was easily taken at 28 m.p.h. The silencer is efficient and noise is not really offensive, at full throttle the wasp-like buzz is sufficient to turn people's heads. Here is a typical example of how the handling of a machine does or does not annoy. In low gear with lots of throttle, the exhaust noise can be loud.

Steering is excellent and the ribbed front tyre is a larger diameter than the rear. Front fork suspension is on the soft side, and during the test exceedingly strong head winds were met with on a 100 mile run but in the main, steering was not greatly affected. On bumpy roads, clatter is heard from the forks.

The riding position appears good for a sporty type of useage, but over long distances the riding position threw too much weight onto the rider's arms and wrists. Starting was



Engine accessibility is good. Seen top is one of the tool boxes which are on either side of the frame

generally good, but on running out of fuel with tap in main position, re-starting could be hard when tap was on reserve position. Possibly this is caused by some kind of air lock setting up. Gear changing is very good but it is possible to miss 1st gear and go straight into 2nd and finding neutral can be tricky.

The headlamp gives a good beam at 30 m.p.h. but the dipped beam with its flat topped effect is poor. The pilot light is too pathetically poor to be used safely at any time. The croaking horn makes folk laugh in complete indifference to its supposed "warning" and when used at night cuts out the headlamp beam. The overtaking of other vehicles called for some consideration—there is little reserve power in a 75 c.c. engine. Gradients certainly affect small powered machines and this meant either a "flying start" for the *Gardena* when approaching a hill, or a steady climb in 2nd gear. In heavy city traffic, the model is a delight to use—acceleration and braking being satisfactory.

Excellent Investment

Very little criticism can be aimed at the *Gardena*. One or two odd items made themselves known accordingly: the kick starter pedal would be a better thing if it were half-inch longer and the speedometer mounting allowed of its twisting to one side. It is held in the headlamp by two weak spring-clips and these were incapable of holding it tightly down. The *Lucia* speedo needle wavered and waggled around the mark, and the internal lighting up of this dial was good when on pilot light but bad when on main beam.

The dual-seat is too narrow for comfort. On test, the throttle twist grip mounting came adrift (two grub screws secure it in place on the handlebars) and the clutch lever rattled loudly. The quick-action filler cap is actuated by a lever and fuel seeped out of this cap onto the tank top.

The "gap" between 2nd and top gears appears too wide (what price a 4-speed gearbox for *Gardena*?) and this meant either labouring in top gear or revving in 2nd gear. A continuous clicking sound came from the front wheel throughout the test (it may have been the speedo drive mounting on the front wheel) and a certain amount of front fork clashing was noticed. Because of the swivelling fulcrum not swivelling in the clutch lever, the sharp edges of the slot in that item eventually sheared off the nipple of the clutch cable.

The *Gardena* should appeal to our adventurous youth with still a drop

of red blood in its veins! Here is a machine with zip and go. It looks good and it is good. It will give sporty performance at economical rates: it will give fun without danger; one can be pleased and proud to own it.

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: "Bianchi" 2-stroke, 35° inclined air cooled. 71.5 c.c. bore 46 mm. stroke, 43 mm. comp., ratio 6.9. Output at 7,000 revs.=3.5 b.h.p. "Del'Orto" carb. with air filter.

TRANSMISSION: 3-speed hand-controlled gearbox. Ratios: 25:1, 16:1, 10:6 to 1. Primary drive by skew gear in oil bath, secondary drive by chain. Multi-plate clutch in oil.

ELECTRICS: A/c flywheel mag.-dyno. 6v. 17w. output, double filament bulb, dip switch and horn. Ignition cut-out.

FRAME: Welded pressed steel box beam type with 2.5-gallon tank. Fitted two tool boxes, top run chain case.

SUSPENSION: Telescopic front fork, rear swinging arm.

WHEELS AND TYRES: Front, 2½ x 19 ribbed; rear, 2½ x 18 studded. Pirelli. Hubs light alloy, rims chromed steel.

BRAKES: Both full width 4-in. dia., ribbed. Rear pedal and cable operated.

OVERALL DIMENSIONS (approx.): Length 70-in., wheelbase 42-in., seat height 30-in., handlebar height, 33-in., width 21-in.

CONCESSIONAIRES: Layford Automotive Ltd., 134/6 King Street, Hammersmith, London, W.6.

PRICE: £108 9s. 11d. (inc. P.T.).

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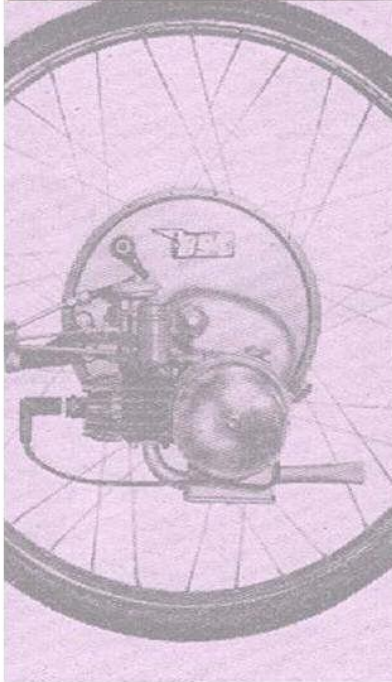
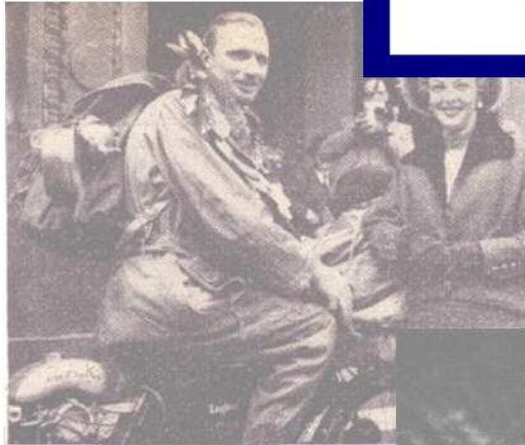
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