

bike

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New Bikes

IF you're a new manufacturer wanting to make an all British bike with no foreign components you can run into severe costing headaches. The group of people who eventually formed Kestrel Motorcycles this year prepared two sets of costings for the 50cc machines they planned to build; one with the bike manufactured and assembled using UK sources only and one for a complete bike produced entirely in Taiwan. The figures they arrived at were £660 and £130 respectively. Staggering isn't it?

They compromised and came up with a machine using as many British bits as possible, the remainder being imported from Italy.

The motor is the ubiquitous 49.6cc Moto Minarelli with single speed transmission engaging through a centrifugal clutch. So why two handlebar levers? You should be asking, having carefully studied the pic. Both brakes are operated from the handlebar levers.

The Brit-built frame is encased in a glass fibre body that owes its ruggedness to the powerboat racing experience of members

of the company.

The bike costs £303.47 plus VAT and Kestrel are aiming to grab some of the sixteenner sales from the Japanese.

Minarelli engines have suffered a poor reputation in the past thanks to the paucity of available spares but Richard Newton, MD of Kestrel, reckons that they have enough stocks of bits to keep their quoted 63 dealers adequately supplied.

As time goes on they are hoping to gradually replace the majority of the foreign components with British parts, provided that they can be supplied at reasonable prices.

Like all bikes in its class, the Kestrel has a design speed of 30mph and, without the benefit of a multi speed transmission, it probably will not get there all that quickly.