

THE
MOTOR CYCLE

Road Tests of New Models

125 c.c. Piatti Scooter

Likeable Runabout with Many Advanced Design Features

Good All-round Performance : Attractive Price

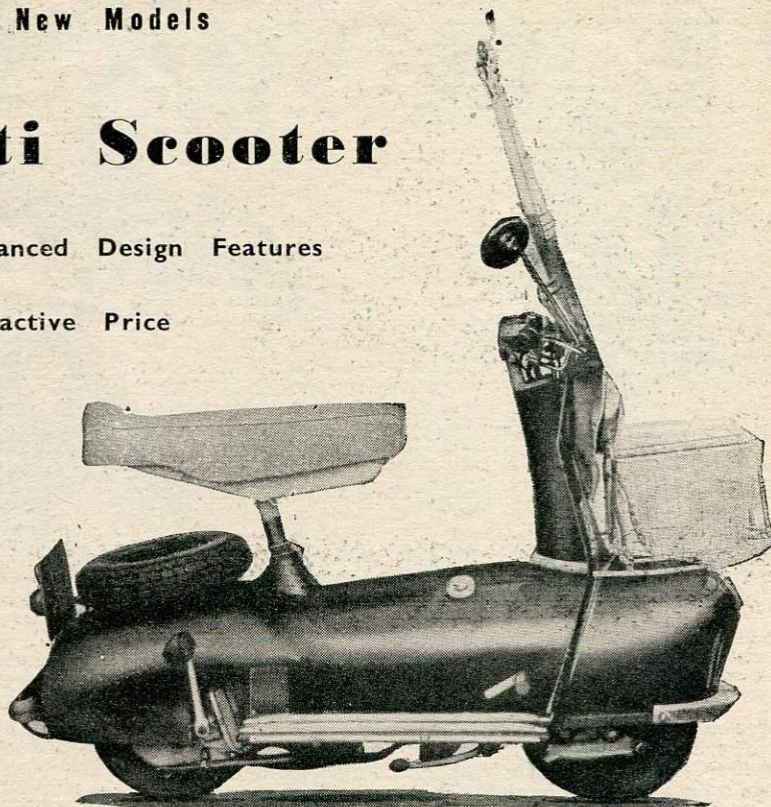
MOST designers of modern scooters have not deviated markedly from the layout evolved by the Italians rather more than 10 years ago. For that reason, and for others, the Piatti is of more than passing interest since its unusual features include a monocoque body and a horizontally disposed engine-transmission unit. The body construction has the advantage of simplicity: steel pressings welded together serve the same purpose as the frame members and panels of orthodox designs. In favour of the horizontal engine unit is a weight distribution which gives a slight bias on the front wheel to counteract the rear loading when a rider or rider and passenger are seated.

As would be expected, bearing in mind the balanced weight distribution and low centre of gravity, the Piatti handles well and the only manifestation of the short wheelbase and small-diameter wheels is pitching on bumpy surfaces and slight rear-wheel hop under heavy braking. Steering is positive and stability outstandingly good on highly polished, greasy surfaces and in strong cross-winds.

Front and rear suspensions are adequate for the performance available though on the hard side. The added weight of a pillion passenger reduced a tendency to pitching on uneven surfaces and increased comfort. The lower attachment of the tension coil spring at the rear provides a three-position adjustment for load, or to suit the road surfaces usually encountered.

The Piatti earns increasing respect as its virtues become more apparent during the first few outings. On the left side of the body is a hinged door which gives access to the fuel tap, carburettor and choke. With the engine absolutely cold a closed choke was required for no more than the first half-minute of running; the choke could then be opened, the door clipped shut and the Piatti ridden off. Within half a mile the engine would be warm enough to give full power. Unless the engine was stone cold, it was unnecessary to use the choke; flooding was never required except as an alternative to the choke.

Starting was always child's play. The kick-starter crank and



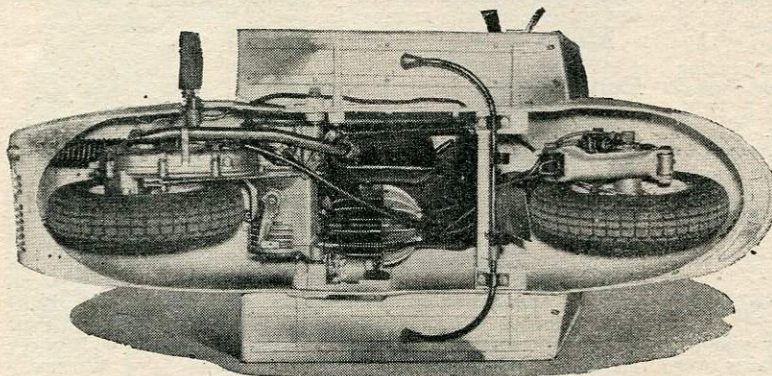
pedal are of sensibly large dimensions and provide such leverage that next to no effort is required to turn the engine. At the most, four easy depressions of the pedal would bring the engine into life and first-kick starting with a hot engine was the usual order.

The engine pulled well at relatively low revolutions and if rapid acceleration were not required top gear could be used from 12 m.p.h. upward. Given normal, easy driving methods—by that is meant no excessive revving in bottom and second gears—the Piatti would hold its own with the general run of vehicles in built-up areas. On journeys in London it was proved to be as time-saving as any other two-wheeler and, of course, quicker than a car. Pick-up is sprightly to just over 30 m.p.h., which is a comfortable cruising speed for the engine irrespective of slight adverse winds and mild gradients. With a following wind, 35 m.p.h. could be held effortlessly. Above the minimum non-snatch speed it was impossible to detect any engine vibration. A two-up load was well within the capabilities of the lusty little power unit which seemed undeterred by any amount of collar work.

Four-stroking under light load and on over-run was slightly less prevalent than with the majority of two-strokes and in any case was rarely noticed because the exhaust is adequately silenced. Indeed, when the engine was pulling at wide throttle openings, induction roar was as noticeable to the rider as exhaust noise. When ticking over the engine would four-stroke regularly, slowly and reliably. During six weeks of daily use the engine never once petered out while idling at a traffic halt.

Overall dimensions of the machine are small but the rider has no sensation of being cramped. There is ample room for his feet (and those of a passenger), the knees are well clear of the weathershield and the handlebar position provides a comfortable reach. During the test the dual-seat was set at a height of 30 inches from ground level which proved suitable for riders of average stature—say 5ft 8in to 5ft 10in. By a

For maintenance the Piatti is laid on its side, when accessibility is excellent. Wheels are carried on stub axles and are interchangeable



simple adjustment seat height can be varied between 28 and 32½ in, a wide range which should meet the requirements of any likely owner. Controls are orthodox with twistgrip gear change and clutch lever on the left of the handlebar, twistgrip throttle and front-brake lever on the right, ignition-and-lighting switch in the handlebar panel housing the speedometer, and the rear-brake pedal mounted on the right side of the body. The clutch and front-brake levers require only a short hand reach and the rear-brake pedal can be operated without lifting the heel from the footboard.

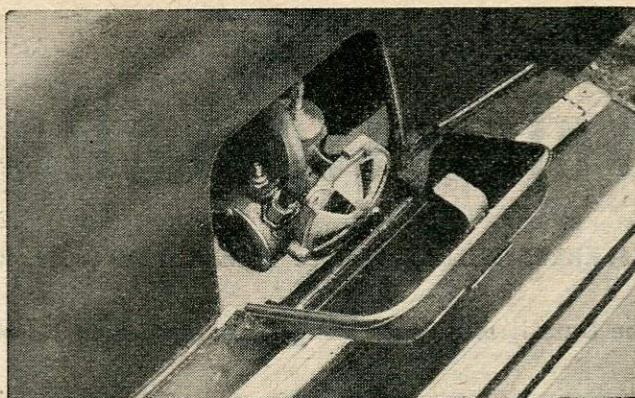
The clutch was light to use, freed completely and, although having a suspicion of unevenness in taking up the drive, was never inclined to slip. Unlike some examples of twistgrip gear changes, that on the Piatti was easy to operate and positive. There was no likelihood of turning the grip beyond second gear when changing up from bottom, or engaging neutral instead of second when changing down; moreover, neutral was readily located when required. Total twistgrip movement (that is, from bottom to top gear) is shorter than average and commendable for that reason.

Both brakes were progressive in operation and extremely powerful. The front brake was so effective and easy to control that in practice it was used almost exclusively, yet it required only one slight adjustment in 500 miles of mainly town running with the usual slowings and stops required by traffic congestion, lights and pedestrian crossings. The stopping distance achieved in the standard test—37 feet from 30 m.p.h.—is good for a scooter yet does not flatter the performance of the brakes under normal usage when crash-stops should not be necessary.

The machine under test was fitted with a prototype windscreen which, like the production model, is attached to lugs provided on the handlebar and is readily adjustable for height and rake. Weathershield and windscreen combine to give excellent protection and in heavy rain the rider suffers less from the elements than do pedestrians. Another commendable extra on the test machine was a shopping basket retained by aerolastics on the luggage grid mounted ahead of the weathershield.

Operated by pulling a knob just below the handlebar panel, the wide stand supports the machine perfectly, irrespective of camber. Alternatively the Piatti can be leaned over to either side to rest securely on the edge of the footboard. With almost all its mechanism enshrouded by the body, access for maintenance is gained by laying the machine horizontally on its side, when accessibility is notably good. (The tank air vent can be closed by an easily operated valve to prevent loss of fuel.) During the test the only attention necessary was to lubricate the control cables, adjust the front brake once and top-up the tyres.

The light weight of the Piatti makes for easy handling in the

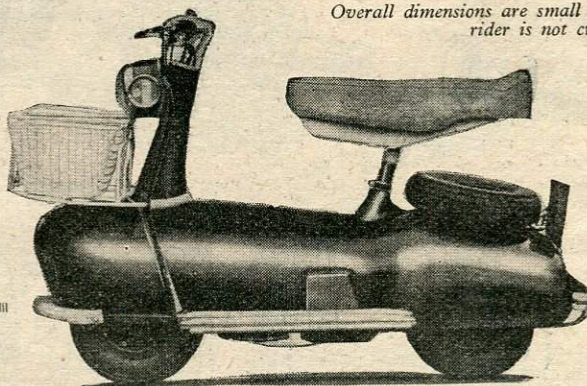


Fuel tap, carburettor tickler and choke are reached by opening a door in the body

garage but rather more steering lock would be an advantage when manoeuvring in confined spaces. Tools are carried in a container forming part of the dual-seat base where they remain dry and clean. At the rear end of the seat base is the carrier for the dry battery for the parking lights. Main lighting is by current direct from the flywheel generator. Standard specification includes a spare wheel with tyre and tube. The model tested was finished in black, but cream and crimson finishes are optional at no extra charge.

As an easy-to-ride, handy, well-equipped runabout of quality manufacture and finish the Piatti is excellent value for money.

Overall dimensions are small yet the rider is not cramped



Information Panel

SPECIFICATION

ENGINE: Piatti 125 c.c. (51 x 61mm) single-cylinder two-stroke. Caged needle-roller big-end bearing. Crankshaft supported in one needle-roller bearing and one single-row journal ball bearing. Light-alloy cylinder head. Compression ratio, 7.2 to 1. Petroil lubrication.

CARBURETTOR: Amal Monobloc type 363/3 with air filter and strangler.

IGNITION and LIGHTING: Wico-Pacy flywheel magneto with six-volt lighting coils. Wico-Pacy 4½ in-diameter headlamp with 24/24 watt bulb. Dry battery for parking lights.

TRANSMISSION: Three-speed gear box in unit with engine; twist-grip control. Gear ratios: bottom, 12.6 to 1; second, 6.9 to 1; top, 4.5 to 1. Single-plate engine-speed clutch with cork inserts running in oil. Transmission by ⅜ x 0.225 in chain in oil-bath case. Rear wheel driven direct from gear box. R.p.m. at 30 m.p.h. in top gear, 3,250.

CONSTRUCTION: Monocoque body formed by steel pressings welded together; weathershield and footboards bolted to main structure. Engine-transmission unit pivoted in Silentbloc bushes.

FUEL CAPACITY: 1½ gallons.

WHEELS and TYRES: 7 in-diameter pressed-steel wheels with split rims carrying 3.50 in-section Dunlop tyres.

BRAKES: 4½ in diameter x ⅞ in wide front and rear.

SUSPENSION: Leading-arm front suspension controlled by coil spring. Engine, transmission and rear wheel pivoted as a unit, controlled by coil spring in tension; three-position adjustment for load.

WHEELBASE: 35 in unladen. Ground clearance, 4½ in unladen.

SEAT: Foam-rubber, cushion-type dual-seat; unladen height, 30 in (adjustable between 28 and 32½ in).

WEIGHT: 196 lb equipped with windscreen and basket and with half a gallon of petrol.

PRICE: £112 10s. With purchase tax (in Great Britain only), £139 10s. Windscreen £4 10 extra; parcel basket £1 1s extra.

ROAD TAX: 17s 6d a year; 4s 10d a quarter.

MAKERS: Cyclemaster, Ltd., Tudor Works, Chertsey Road, Byfleet, Weybridge, Surrey.

DESCRIPTION: The Motor Cycle, 24 May 1956.

PERFORMANCE DATA

MEAN MAXIMUM SPEED: Bottom 19 m.p.h.
Second 29 m.p.h.
Top 38 m.p.h.

HIGHEST ONE-WAY SPEED: 40 m.p.h. (windscreen fitted; tail wind).

MEAN ACCELERATION: 10-20 m.p.h. 15-25 m.p.h. 20-30 m.p.h.
Second 4.5 sec 5.5 sec — sec
Top 10.6 sec 10 sec 13 sec

Mean speed at end of quarter mile from rest: maximum.

Mean time taken from rest to 30 m.p.h. (through gears): 14 sec.

PETROL CONSUMPTION: At 20 m.p.h., 115 m.p.g.; at 30 m.p.h., 95 m.p.g.

BRAKING: From 30 m.p.h. to rest 37ft (surface, dry tarmac).

TURNING CIRCLE: 16ft.

MINIMUM NON-SNATCH SPEED: 9 m.p.h. in top gear.

WEIGHT PER C.C.: 1.56 lb.

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