

SUZUKI OR50

FUNKY FIFTIES

BETA MX4S

If you're stuck with a 30mph top speed, there's only one way for a Sixteener bike to go; into the realms of outlandish style.

Two new models to exploit differing themes are the Suzuki OR50 and the Beta MX4S. Words by Roger Atyeo, photography by John Perkins.

Make no mistake, if you're sixteen and into the Clash, riding around on a restricted fifty isn't the sort of activity you'll want to go along with openly. But if you're stuck with it, apart from running the gamut of the boys in blue, there's not much you can do.

Or is there? Take a look at the bikes here and start eating your heart out. After all there hasn't been a fifty that boasted a raked fork, high-rise handlebar, peanut tank, sissy bar and all the rest of the chopper paraphernalia. Neither has there been a restricted bike that looks as if



it could blow off a Maico Magnum enduro racer. But here they are: Suzuki's OR50 mini-chopper and the Beta MX4S red racer look-alike.

Now we'll be the first to admit that neither of these machines is going to turn on either a Hell's Angel or a Dai Jeremiah. But Mr Average, or more significantly that sweet thing down at the disco, isn't going to know the difference. And that's the point. Riding these bikes you'll look the part, and what more could you want.

Now if you think that these are the pampered bleatings of an over-excited type-writer jockey eager to please the corporate feelings of the respective importers, think again. We got enough feedback from fellow road users and bikers alike to convince us that there's more to this pint-size posing than meets the eye. For example, one commuting trip from out of town was transformed from what would have been an otherwise straightforward battle on a restricted sixteen-er into a jaunty run peppered first by banter with a bunch

of girls in the back of a coach, then jokes at traffic lights plus the collective yells of a group of youngsters who sprawled out a station and made an immediate bee-line for the Suzuki.

What got them going wasn't something built up by cunning advertising or marketing ploys; the Suzuki just looks great. It might make Sonny Barger cringe in embarrassment but who cares about that.

What Suzuki have done with the OR50 is to basically take the engine from the ZR50-X1 and slot it into a smaller frame with tiny cast alloy wheels. Surprisingly, it's not cramped, though there's no room for a passenger, and with the seat height of 27½ inches the OR will accommodate anyone from five feet nothing to somebody the size of our art editor, who has to duck to get in the door.

Sitting in the bike rather than on it, you recline against the seat back, inside which is a small stash compartment for those small packets, and haul back on the handlebar. The controls are all the usual



But in its ability to carve through traffic it should be just as able. Its brakes, a nine-inch disc up front and a rear five-inch drum are more than adequate and it has steering and roadholding sufficient to counter any four wheel antic. The suspension is soft and underdamped for heavy riders though.

When it arrives in August the OR50 will cost £399, the same as Honda's racer profile MB50. A snip, we think.

If you're slightly more well heeled and inclined towards off road machinery, the Beta MX4S provides a similar thrill. The designers at Beta's Italian factory have fashioned a bike that has the feel and appearance of a full blown enduro machine. It offers sixteen-year-olds a little more than Japanese make-believe motorcycling can.

The MX4S is not completely new to our shores, being a derivative of the earlier MX4. The importers, Harglo Ltd. reckoned a machine that sixteen-year-olds could throw around and imagine they were Graham Noyce would be a success. Instead of modifying the 49cc two-stroke engine to develop less power, as on the Suzuki, to restrict the top speed to about 35mph, the factory simply lowered the gearing by using a smaller twelve-tooth gearbox sprocket. As you might imagine, acceleration through the four gears is pretty nippy, but try as you may, you won't go over the dreaded 35mph.

Restricted though it is, the Beta looks and definitely feels like the genuine goods. This is mainly due to the snappy red colour scheme for everything except the

components found on larger machines including turn signals, dip and main beam switches and the horn button.

There's instrumentation of the same vein, with a rev counter and speedo plus a couple of warning lamps. The ignition switch between the dials has two positions; the first is a check for the low-oil-level lamp, the second for firing up the bike.

The engine itself follows conventional lines. It's a single cylinder two-stroke with a five speed gearbox, chain final drive and separate pump lubrication. Induction is like Suzuki's trail bikes with a reed-valve that feeds the crankcase from the carburettor in addition to the normal piston port, an arrangement that broadens the power curve.

Whether this is expedient on a Sixteener is arguable because peak power isn't a major goal. On the restricted version sold in Japan called the Hotspur (there must be a Tottenham supporter at the factory) which was the only one available from the importers for testing, things are

different. Gear changes from bottom to second would jerk up the front wheel and the top speed when you revved

the motor to 9,000rpm was nearly 50mph.

The restricted version will no doubt be less spectacular.



	Suzuki OR50	Beta MX4S
Price inc. VAT:	£399	£445
Warranty:	12 months/ unlimited mileage	Sale of Goods Act
Engine:	Case-reed two-stroke single	Two-stroke single
Capacity:	49cc (41x37.8mm)	49.6cc (38.8x42mm)
Lubrication:	Auto pump	Petrol mix
Compression ratio:	6.7 to 1 (corrected)	11 to 1
Carburetion:	Mikuni	14mm Dellorto
Ignition:	Pointless electronic	Magneto
Max power:	n/a	n/a
Primary drive:	Gear	Gear
Clutch:	Wet multiplate	Wet multiplate
Gearbox:	Five speed	Four speed
Final drive:	Roller chain	Roller chain
Fuel capacity:	1.1 gallons	2 gallons
Electrics:	Flywheel magneto 6v battery, 25w headlamp	Flywheel magneto, Direct lighting.
Frame:	Single down tube	Duplex cradle
Suspension:	Telescopic fork (f) Swing arm (r)	Telescopic fork (f) Swing arm (r)
Tyres:	2.50x17in (f) 3.00x14in (r)	Metzeler, 2.50x19(f) 3.50x17(r)
Brakes:	9in disc (f) Drum (r)	Drum (f) Drum (r)
DIMENSIONS		
Wheelbase:	43.2inches	49inches
Seat height:	27½inches	33inches
Grnd clrcnc:	7.8inches	12½inches
H'bar width:	25.8inches	31½inches
Weight:	165lbs	n/a
PERFORMANCE		
Top speed:	35mph	35mph
Fuel consumption:	n/a	n/a
Importer:	Heron-Suzuki GB Ltd 87 Beddington Lane, Croydon, Surrey	Harglo Ltd, 462 Station Road, Dorridge, Solihull, West Midlands



engine, hubs and wheel rims. The exhaust system is matt black. Mudguards are in semi-flexible red plastic which should stand a few smacks before they need replacing. Tyres and wheels are the pukka article too. Rubber is courtesy of Metzeler in 250x19 and 350x17 sizes.

The folding footrests are sprung, so you won't scar any shins if you become impatient at pedestrian crossings. To complete the picture a toolkit is strapped to the bracing strut on the full enduro handlebar. There's no instrumentation.

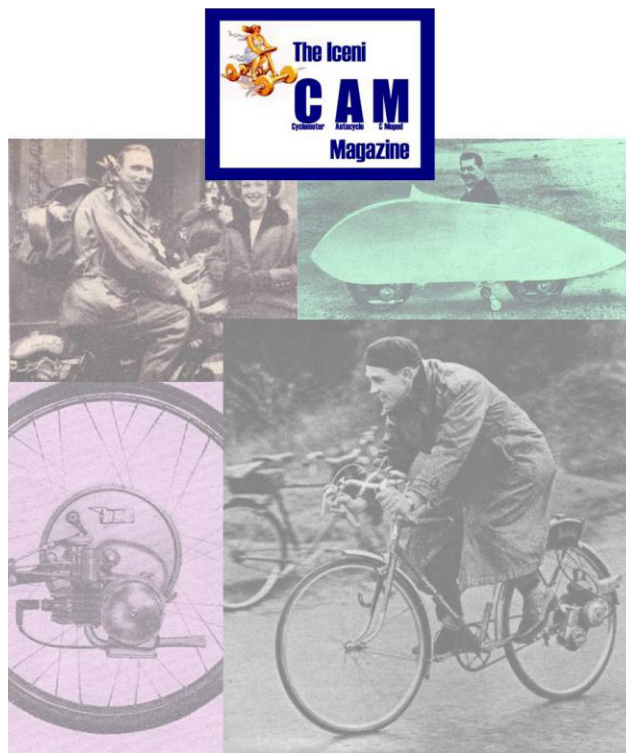
The seat is proper competition stuff and in addition to the MX4S's new cosmetic charm the tight suspension has been afforded the benefits of off road damping. The Beta's guiding head light is in the off-road vein, active only when the bike is fired up. It's okay for that jaunt around town at midnight but not so good if you are caught playing enduros and the sun decides to pack it up for the

day.

Riding the MX4S turned out to be a lot of fun. One of the things that distinguishes it from others is its large physique, large certainly for a machine of such lowly capacity. There was none of this mini-bike stuff, climbing aboard only to find you can't reach the bars because your knees are crammed up under your chin. The drum brakes were very good, strong enough to bring the bike to stop but not vicious enough to lock up the wheels. To keep ahead of the traffic or up with it any way you had to have pretty slick footwork but it was possible up to 30-mph after that you had to keep your tail clean.

Unfortunately we were not able to put the Beta through its paces out in Wales nor on the dirt mound near Brent Cross for that matter, but in town the £445 Beta MX4S was great fun and did all asked of it, we can ask for no more.

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