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THE last time we went on the Continent to test bikes we stuck almost exclusively to the French motorway network, clocking up 2,000 miles in a four-day mid-February ride down to Nice in the South of France. Although we did what we set out to do, namely ride three big bikes (a Z900 Kawasaki, S3 750 Moto-Guzzi and R90S BMW) hard and fast to put 500 miles under three sets of very expensive wheels on four consecutive days, we swore, when it was all over, that never again would we get stuck with motorway riding for more than a few hours.

When you think about it the reasons are pretty obvious, trouble is you don't really start to consider the problems of high-speed, long distance motorway riding until



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you have been hanging onto a pair of handlebars in a 100 mph breeze for a couple of hours, and arm, neck and leg muscles are screaming for relief — and there is still another eight hours' riding to come. It's then that the exhilaration and concentration evaporate to be replaced by a lethargy induced part by discomfort and partly by the sheer boredom of not having very much to do, except for keeping a wary eye open for the law.

All this came back to me when the 850 Moto-Guzzi Le Mans and its touring stablemate, the 850 T3, arrived for test and thoughts turned to some big riding which might put the bikes under as much stress as the riders. These days high speed, long distance riding can only mean the Continent, especially if your driving licence is badly scared and only needs one more rubber stamp in the back to complete the set.

So, not that long after these thoughts had been kicked around, Bob Goddard, myself and the two Guzzis were down

with plenty of power on hand whenever it's required. Riding position, too, is at its best with the wind pressure balancing the rider and taking a lot of weight off wrists and arms.

The quick blast up to Ghent helped to restore average speed to around 60 mph, so as we turned off onto the E3 steering north east for Antwerp and Holland, Bob took the lead on the T3 and calmed things down a bit, reducing cruising speed to a steady 90 mph.

About ten miles short of the Dutch border the Le Mans ran on to reserve within sight of a motorway filling station and snack bar. By that stage we had covered about 190 miles in three hours to give an average speed of 63 mph, including stops.

It was here, after we had refuelled the bikes and were tucking into a quick meal that the Le Mans decided to show its teeth and fell off its prop stand. We were given the news by two very agitated petrol pump attendants banging like hell on the windows of the snack bar and

Mans and lacked the sportster's low down power, it turned out to be at least as good if not better in braking and handling. The linked disc brakes, similar to those fitted to the Le Mans were far more powerful and progressive and, for my money, handling was lighter and more responsive.

We left Holland for our quick detour into Germany on the E39, eventually picking up the E5, after circuiting Aachen, to get back into Belgium and Liege.

At Liege we stopped to buy film and to swop bikes, Bob not being very happy with the riding position on the Le Mans and complaining of wrist and back ache. At Liege, too, we said a not so fond farewell to the motorway network of northern Europe which, for all its feature-

wick to catch him up. The Yamaha rider interpreted it as an invitation to a race and pulled in close behind popping out of the Guzzi's slipstream every few yards and threatening to pass. Now the Guzzi is a pretty sweet handling bike with power enough to see the big Yamaha twin off in third gear, but this guy obviously fancied himself as a racer while I don't. I had just decided to let him pass when a tight right hander with a pretty evil looking polished tar surface came up. We went into it much too quickly, the Guzzi twitching its way round as the power was shut off and then fed back on. As the bike straightened up I was just in time to see the Yamaha leaving the corner broadside on, the rider struggling to regain

THE JOURNEY by Colin Mayo

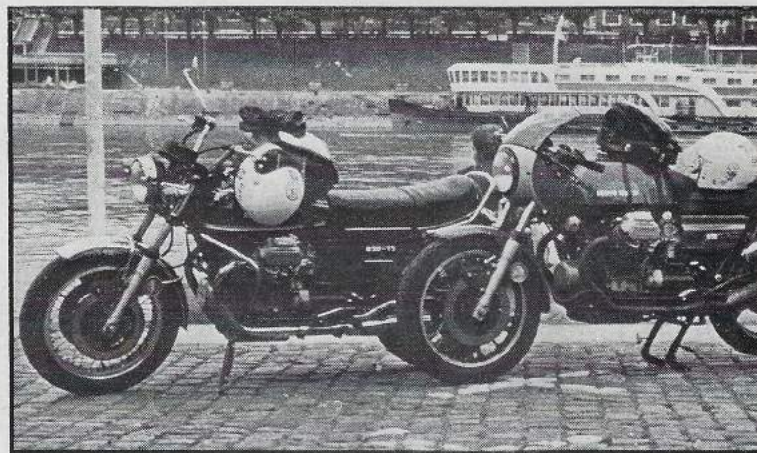
at Ramsgate one Friday morning waiting to roll onto the 8.30 am hovercraft to Calais. The plan? To ride 1,400 miles through Belgium, Holland, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland and France as quickly and as safely as possible putting in around 500 miles per day.

The first leg from Calais up to Ostend was interrupted only for petrol on the outskirts of Calais and a quick stop at the customs post on the French/Belgian border. Much of the road was arrow straight three lane highway and pretty fast. The Guzzis would have been happy on it at 90 but a never ending succession of towns, plus a tortuous diversion around Dunkerque meant the bikes had to be held in check on this first 50 mile stretch.

At Ostend we picked up the E5 motorway for Ghent, slotted onto the fast lane and wound up to 120 mph, which, allowing for the gross speedo error on both bikes, we reckoned to be a true speed of 105 mph. Over this stage I was piloting the Le Mans and if ever a bike was built for fast effortless motorway cruising it is this one. With 5,500 rpm on the tacho the motor is smooth

making strange faces. At first we thought someone had ridden off on one or both of the bikes and rushed outside expecting the worst. Fortunately, the Guzzi was completely unmarked but the incident did highlight the bike's poorly designed centre and side stands. The problem is that there is no hand hold fitted to help drag the machine back onto its centre stand so the side stand tends to be used a lot more than usual, thus increasing the risk of it digging into soft ground and allowing the machine to fall over.

Half-an-hour later with Bob on the Le Mans and me following on the T3 we crossed the border into Holland heading for Eindhoven and the E9 motorway down to Aachen. After the heavy traffic of the E3 the E9 was comparatively deserted allowing us to increase the pace to a steady 100 mph. This was my first chance to sample the T3 and the most noticeable difference between it and the Le Mans, apart from the armchair comfort of the riding position, was the motor which felt considerably rougher and a lot busier at high speeds. While the T3 felt at least 20 mph slower than the Le



less boredom, had served a purpose in making it possible for us to get through Belgium, Holland, Germany and back into Belgium in little more than five hours.

We pointed the Guzzis southward out of Liege picking up the N15 for Luxembourg. For me the following couple of hours remain the most memorable part of the trip, for somehow we managed to stray from the main road and found ourselves on a well surfaced secondary road heading into the Ardennes. It was a different world of thickly forested and lush countryside, the road curving and swooping into valleys and through villages full of holidaymakers. On one winding section into La Roche I spotted in the mirror of the Le Mans that we had suddenly been joined by another bike and, worried that the police had finally caught up with us, I slowed to check it out. It turned out to be a shirt sleeved Yamaha 750 twin rider with his girl on the pillion and, as Bob had pushed on, I turned up the

control. It was a very white faced pillion passenger who waved to us from the Yamaha as Bob and I got the map out in La Roche to find a route back to the N15.

Eventually we picked up the route at Bastogne where the N15 becomes the N4, the main drag through from Brussels to Luxembourg and Switzerland. As expected the road was heavy with holiday traffic but as the detour had cost a lot of time we pushed on with flat out blasts of acceleration followed by heavy braking as we surged past and then slowed for each little convoy of cars and caravans.

After a quick stop for fuel we pushed on into Luxembourg where the temptation to sink a beer and relax aching muscles was not overcome. It was then that we found we only needed to do another 60 miles to hit the day's target of 500 miles and, as it was still only 5.30 pm, the first beer was followed by another. An hour later, after taking photographs of the bikes and checking

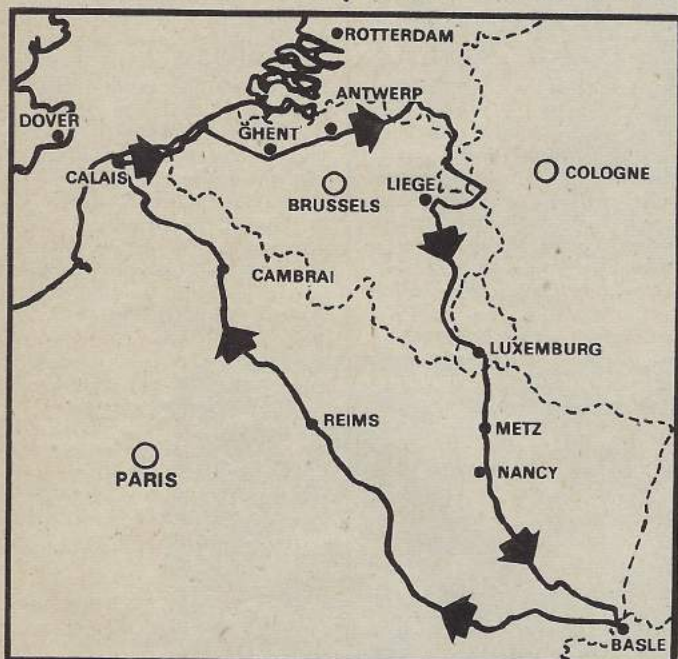
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oil levels, we were rolling again, the plan being to get the 60 miles in as quickly as possible and then to start looking for a hotel.

The N53/N57 down through Metz and Nancy was still busy but the distances between the bunches of cars had lengthened leaving gaps of open road allowing 90 mph to be held for long stretches. We arrived at Nancy at 8 pm and with the day's mileage at 520 it was decided to call it a day at the next town down the road. Twenty miles, four towns and half-a-dozen full up hotels later we arrived in Charmes, mid-way between Nancy

Charmes. Not too bad considering the stop for petrol, a 10 mile stretch of switchback road over the Col de Bullon and a 10 minute wait to get through the Swiss customs.

We stopped longer than we should have done in Basel, first by getting lost then wasting time taking photographs of the bikes. We finally moved off with half the day gone, 400 miles to go and rain clouds gathering in the direction we were going. Our route back through France would cut nearly straight across country taking us well to the east of Paris via Chaumont, Reims and St. Quentin. The first 95 miles of



and Epinal where, on the second attempt we found a hotel with two spare beds. By the time we had checked in, washed and charged down to the restaurant it was 9 pm and the kitchen staff were on their way home. Our meal that night comprised two ham sandwiches and a dish of olives.

In contrast to the 80 degree temperature of the previous day it was overcast and considerably cooler as we rode out of Charmes at 8.45 on Saturday morning. Our route, N57 and N66 down to Mulhouse and then across the Swiss border into Basel looked straightforward enough on the map and it turned out to be so with only one brief halt for fuel to interrupt progress. We arrived in Basel at about 11.30 am, taking 2½ hours to cover the 114 miles from

it through Belfort and Vesoul to Combeaufontaine, where we refuelled, were fast and interesting. Traffic was light and the roads wide with a mixture of sweeping bends that could be taken at a comfortable 90 mph and others, usually preceded by very fast straights, where even 40 mph was pushing it. Bob on the T3 was obviously enjoying himself cranking the big Guzzi into right and left handers with a lot of confidence.

We changed bikes at the Combeaufontaine petrol stop and pressed on, the 140 miles to Chalons taking 2½ hours because of heavy holiday traffic. In fact, this stretch of road was probably the most tiring of the whole trip with continuous heavy braking and full bore acceleration calling for maximum concentration, particularly from the

rider of the second bike where there was a constant temptation to follow the first bike through closing traffic gap.

We stopped in Chalons for a beer and sandwich and as we remounted the first flecks of rain started falling. The deluge held off for another couple of miles before the sky opened and rain-drops the size of 5p pieces started falling. Luckily, it was only a shower but the roads were like glass and were particularly dangerous where the surface had been chewed up by heavy lorries. By Reims they had dried and we were again cruising at 90/100 mph on mainly straight roads.

At Corbery we stopped for our sixth and final petrol stop and then, still on the N44, rolled on to St. Quentin where it again started raining. By then it was 7.30 pm so tired, wet and hungry we decided to push on to Cambrai, about 20 miles up the road and look for a hotel. Total mileage for the day was 560 and the only cause for worry was

that the brake fluid warning light on the Le Mans had come on and refused to go out as we cruised round Cambrai looking for a hotel.

Our guess that the Le Mans' electrics had taken a dislike to the previous day's rain was proved wrong the following morning when we checked the rear brake fluid level and found it well down. After a check for fluid leaks we decided it would be safe to ride the bike the remaining 100 miles to Calais and then top the reservoir up when we landed in Ramsgate.

We arrived at Calais early on Sunday morning and after a 40 minute trip on the hovercraft landed at Ramsgate at 11.30. Three hours later the trip was over and we were back in Peterborough.

Total door-to-door mileage worked out at 1,412 miles with an average running time speed of 59 mph and an average fuel consumption of 48.9 mpg for the Le Mans and 53.9 mpg for the T3. Both bikes used 2 pints of oil.

THE BIKES

by Bob Goddard

KEEPING up an average speed of nearly 60 mph for three days and 1,400 miles over totally unknown roads through six European countries teaches you quite a lot about a motorcycle, and a few things about yourself as well. The two Guzzis that Colin Mayo and I shared for this high speed expedition into the unknown were given an even break. Neither were really suitable, for directly opposite reasons — the cafe racer Le Mans promised to be uncomfortable over the twelve hours we proposed to ride each day, and the T3 touring version would be gasping to keep up ... or so we thought.

LE MANS

Cafe racers are a bit like choppers in that you either like 'em or loathe 'em, depending how much cowboy there is in you. So it was interesting to note Colin's reaction when Guzzi importers Coburn and Hughes rang to say the lovely Latin Le Mans was ready for us, if we were ready for it ...

With a subdued whoop, the Ed grabbed his stetson — sorry

AGV, and moseyed off down to Luton to round up his thoroughbred Italian stallion.

But the gallop back to Peterborough was a bit of an anticlimax. Perhaps Colin had expected too much after the impressive S3 750 Moto-Guzzi — after all the Le Mans did look as though it would crack the sound barrier and gobble up Z900s on the way. While it definitely had a bit more mid-range surge than the 750 version, the overall performance was only slightly improved and the gear-change was just as crunchy and awkward as ever. Nevertheless there could be no doubt that this was quite some motorbike, and a very tempting alternative for wealthy riders tired of the plethora of civilised and domesticated Japanese machines.

I finally managed to persuade Colin to part with the Le Mans one evening, and pointed it homewards to discover for myself what it was about the bike that makes every motorcyclist's mouth water. The 30 miles was just far enough for me to get used to the bike sufficiently to put it through its paces around the curves and bends of

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the Nene Valley without encountering any discomfort from the stretched-out riding position. The racing crouch has to be a compromise to allow different shaped riders to fit the bike, and was obviously layed out by someone considerably lankier than me because the seat-over-tank design prevented me from sitting up much for corners or in town, and the hump at the back of the seat was so far away that I couldn't rest my bum against it and still keep control of the machine.

Laying across the big red tank and peering at the fast-unfolding world through the little flyscreen, the Guzzi felt very fast. The speedo said I was travelling very fast, and the unyielding suspension made the bike lively over bumps to add to the illusion. But at our test track a few days later our electronic timing equipment showed the Veglia instrument on the bike to be massively incorrect. At an indicated 100mph true speed was 77.5 mph, and the top speed at the end of the one-mile straight with a strong back wind was 122 mph while the speedo claimed something in excess of 155 mph!

Perhaps if the Le Mans were fitted with a clock on the instrument panel like its nearest rival the R90S BMW, it could stretch 20 hours to fill each day so that the rider would not be left puzzling why the Le Mans took as long to complete a journey as other machines which were apparently much slower!

Whether you believed what the speedo was reading or not, there could be no doubt that the long, low Le Mans would go round bends quite a bit faster than many of its Oriental con-

temporaries, and took to sweeping country roads like a duck to water. It responded well to being pushed hard and while bumps and other road irregularities were passed on instantly to the rider's backside, the jolts served only to keep me aware of the nature of the tarmac and did not put the Guzzi off line or induce any of the wriggling or weaving that limits the performance of many so-called superbikes.

Maybe it was because of the Le Mans' surefooted cornering that I approached the little jump where the road drops away under a railway bridge faster than normal, but whatever the reason I learned an important lesson about the aerobatic peculiarities of the machine — they lie down when the wheels come off the road! That amusing torque reaction that flicks the bike from left to right as you blip the throttle at traffic lights has no restraining influence when it is airborne, and because the engine raced for a split second the bike tried to turn around its own crankshaft.

My immediate reaction was to swap my expression of smug confidence for one of shocked surprise, and to shut the throttle. Fortunately the latter reversed the effect of the torque reaction and the bike landed perfectly upright as if nothing had ever happened, but the smug expression never returned for as I cracked open the throttle to reassert my authority up the next hill there was a loud pop as the right hand cylinder spat out its exhaust pipe in disgust and I was forced to tootle the last four miles home with the Le Mans sounding like a machine gun being fired down a drain-pipe.

The exhaust had been damaged in a minor accident by a previous tester, and the flange on the head end of the exhaust pipe had been brazed back on. It was obviously an unsatisfactory arrangement, but with only a few days left before we were due to set off for Le Grand Thrash De Europe and the only spare exhaust pipes stuck in customs, there was no alternative but to braze it back on again. It is a credit to the skill of MCM's ace welder Dave Walker that the repaired exhaust gave no more trouble. Weld-done lad, you deserve all the braze.

The Le Mans' fat spread of powerful torque showed itself in the standing start quarter mile times. I hit 13.6 seconds on the third run, then the clutch started slipping like mad so we left it at that. The weight of the reciprocating parts inside the big V-twin motor have so much momentum that it was not possible to wind it up and pop the clutch without the back wheel breaking away, and the high first gear meant feeding the clutch in fairly gradually too, so when you consider the time lost getting the machine moving the acceleration time is even more impressive.

We decided that despite the crunchy cog selection, gear changing would be improved if we positioned the gear lever lower so it could be operated without taking your foot off the rest. This was an extremely fiddly operation and took about

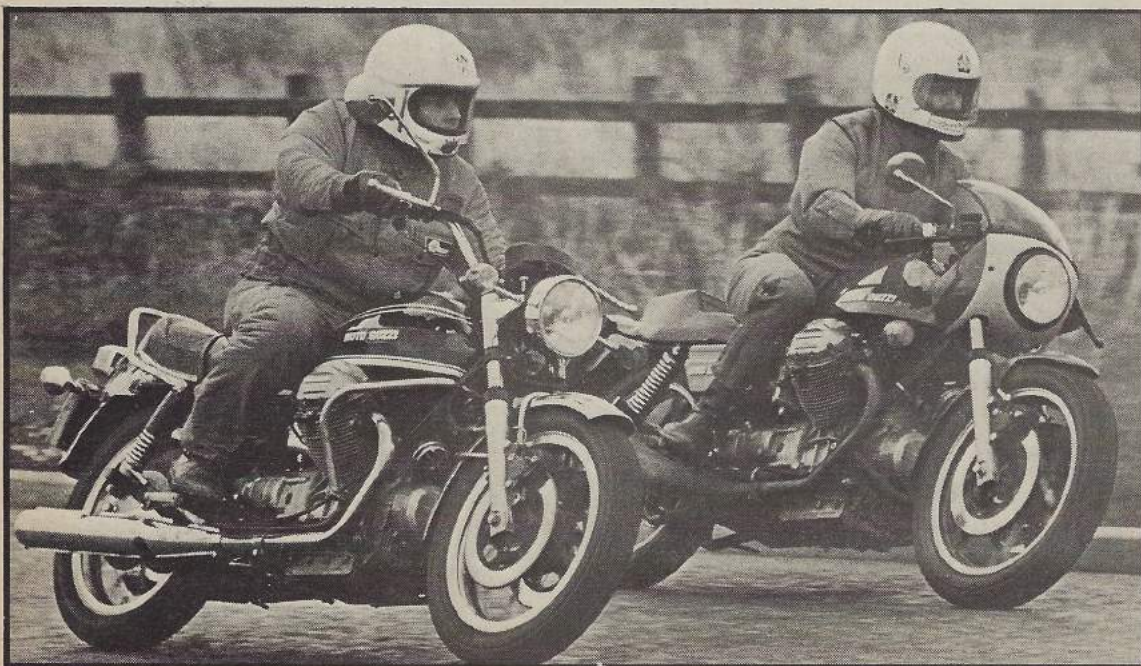
half an hour — and then we found the lever fouled the exhaust pipe when attempting to change down, and we had another happy half hour adjusting it back again... After a time, and four or five different countries we had learned to live with making each change of gear slowly and carefully, but on a pseudo-racer it's a bit of a let down.

The Moto-Guzzi linked braking system that operates one of the front discs and the rear disc by pressing the foot pedal, and the other front disc brake operated in emergencies by the hand lever is one of the most sensible advances in motorcycle technology in recent years, and works very well, although the Le Mans brakes required quite a lot of pressure to stop the bike, and the brakes on the 850 T3 were much more effective — which is odd, since they both have identical brakes, and the T3 is over 60 lb heavier. Being able to slow down quite adequately with the foot pedal left the right hand free to operate the throttle, which was a good thing since the twist grip action was exceptionally heavy and both Colin and I suffered from wrist ache and blisters during the continental trip.

The petrol tank, which is the same unit as fitted to the S3 750 sportster, held about four and a half gallons, and with consumption over the trip averaging a fraction under 50mpg, we were able to put in around 200 miles between fuel stops, which is a very useful range. Oil consumption was 800 miles per pint.

The only time the Le Mans showed up a handling fault was when I had to shut the throttle half way through a long sweeping curve a few miles before Chaumont because the road surface turned into a series of deepening ripples, and the Guzzi responded with three or four wags of its tail, but I doubt if any machine would have done better in the circumstances.

As we had expected, the Le Mans got pretty uncomfortable after a few hours in the saddle. I got it mostly in the small of my back and arms, while Colin complained of leg cramps. It wasn't unbearable, but annoying because the discomfort could so easily be avoided if Moto Guzzi had the courage of their convictions, and did away with the pillion footrests and brought the seat hump further forward. It was practically impossible to



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take a passenger on the S3, and it had more seat room than the Le Mans.

The lights were good enough for 70 mph on unlit roads and were about average for a bike of the Guzzi's size and performance, but I didn't like the switches. The main lights switch is too far away to be easily operated by the thumb, and incorporates an awkward to operate sliding safety catch so that the lights cannot be inadvertently doused by overstepping the dip mark. The combined horn/headlamp flasher button worked all right if you could remember which way to press it, but the indicator switch had too little travel and no positive stop in the central off position. With no repeater on the instrument panel it was easy to leave the wipers on. The only light on the panel that could be seen in daylight was the brake warning light that indicated that the fluid level in the reservoir was low. It came on during the test and although we couldn't see where the fluid was going to, we took no chances and topped the level up, and checked the T3's reservoir at the same time since this model does not have a warning light. Although the Italians are not famed for their electrics the only trouble we had

adjust the chain is a strong bonus. But in so many ways the Le Mans is a showpiece to be admired and envied and is not nearly so inspiring to ride as it looks.

The important thing is that it is very different and captures the same exotic aura that Ferraris or Lamborghinis thrive on. At £2,000 it is overpriced, but that will not stop the importers Coburn and Hughes selling every machine as fast as they can get them.

850 T3

THE T3 had a much easier time than the Le Mans during our tests because it did not have any flash image or reputation to live up to. It looks like a big luxurious motorcycle, eminently suited to long distance touring and turned out to be exactly that. Basically the same motor as the Le Mans with smaller carburetors and softer cams, the T3 produced the kind of power that V-twins are justifiably famous for — stump-pulling torque.

With the bike just trickling along at 1,000 rpm on a whiff of

seat offers the other extreme to the Le Mans in terms of comfort.

We had expected the T3 to be struggling to stay with the Le Mans because of the latter's superior engine performance, but while the T3 was much nearer the limits of its engine's capability for most of the time it seemed easy to keep up, and there was never any need for the Le Mans to wait for the T3 to catch up. Its softer suspension made for a much more comfortable ride but made no noticeable difference to handling, and the tourer went round bends with just as much surefooted confidence as its athletic brother. Through towns, and most notably on one section of twisty hairpin swervery through the Moselle valley, the T3 was a much easier ride. The more positive braking, upright riding position and superior low speed performance out of bends all worked in the T3's favour and made the Le Mans look a bit cumbersome.

Those upright handlebars did cause some aches because of the speeds we had to maintain, but it was usually an ache in the back of my neck at straining my helmet against the headwind, rather than the socket-pulling arm ache I had expected. The gearchange and clutch action were better than the Le Mans, maybe because the T3 had had an easier time at the hands of test journalists, but the gearchange was no better than a BMW.

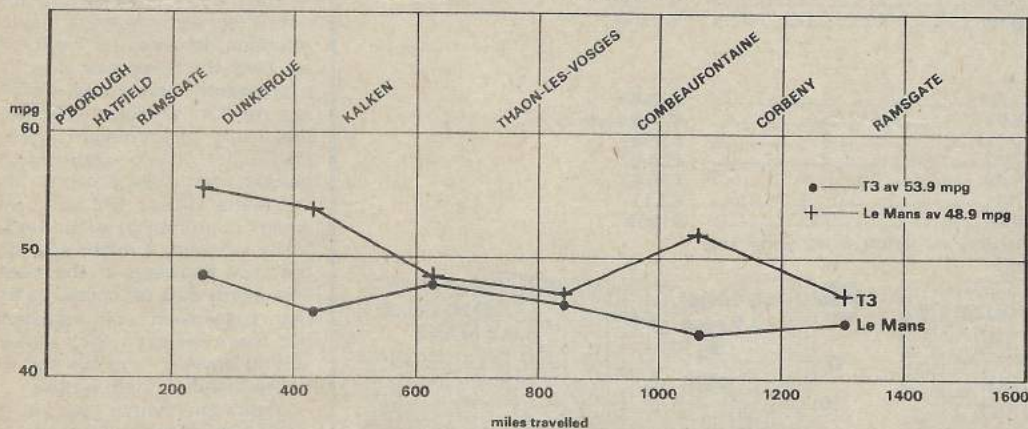
sometimes a squeal from the rear tyre as the hefty motor objected to being slowed down so sharply.

Despite having to work that much harder than the Le Mans, the T3 recorded an overall average of 53.9 mpg, and I would expect it to reach around 60 mpg under normal touring conditions. The immense 5.3 gallon tank gives a range of over 300 miles, and even the most ardent globetrotter cannot complain at that. Oil consumption was the same as the Le Mans at 800 mpp, and a fair quantity of that ended up on my right shin from a leak identical to that of the sportster.

The 109 mph top speed was perfectly adequate for a machine of this nature, and while the 15 second standing quarter mile time is not particularly inspiring, the T3 had enough go to detune a fun-loving Porsche driver who gave up after two attempts to beat us away from the lights as we passed through London on our way to Ramsgate for the start of the continental romp.

Most outstanding were the brakes, which required so little effort to slow the bike. A pillion passenger commented that the machine didn't seem to be slowing down at all for junctions or bends, yet somehow managed to have decelerated to the right speed to negotiate them all. The secret lies again in the linked braking system. With a conventional braking system where you have difficulty in maintaining a smooth deceleration while blipping the throttle with your thumb for downward changes, slowing down is a jerky helmet-clonking affair, but on the Guzzis the brakes can be fed on or off as smoothly as you like while your hands are left free to juggle with the throttle and clutch.

On both the big Guzzis the centre and side stands were a pig to use. The sidestand pivots out from the frame near the front of the engine, requiring the rider to get out of the seat to put it up or down, and the foot of the stand is so neatly tucked away beneath the exhaust pipe that you have a choice of either fiddling with your boot toe for ages to try and get it down, or try to balance the machine with one hand while you bend down and pull it out by hand. The centre stand was almost as awkward. You have to feel around with your boot under the silencer until you locate the stand lug to flick the stand down, then transfer your boot to the far end of the stand foot and lean all your weight on it to lever the bike up and back. The designs probably aid ground clearance when cornering, but with a little more thought could have been simple



during the trip was a finicky ignition switch which cut out all the electrics if you so much as touched the key.

The Le Mans never really felt as though it was trying despite the rapid nature of our journey, and the lopsided rumble of the big V-twin motor had a relaxed feel to it. That the machine completed the 1,500 miles with no more than a slight weep from the righthand cylinder head speaks well for the Italian engineering, and the luxury of not having to lubricate and

gas, the motor would slam its hefty pistons at your knees with a shuddering rumble at a twist of the grip and you could feel each firing stroke heaving the bike forward. Outside town you could use top gear like an automatic, and with only the foot brake pedal necessary for slowing the bike for corners the result was an extremely relaxing ride. It is an ideal bike for carrying a pillion passenger, the extra burden being taken easily into the T3's long-legged stride and the ample space of the well padded dual

The docility of the bike is deceiving. Leaving a lunch stop one day I took the drop of engine revs to mean the clutch was fully engaged, and negligently let go of the lever. Four and a half hundredweight of motorcycle reared up on its back wheel and shot off down the road with me barely hanging on to the bars. I was more careful in future, but the heavy flywheel effect could be felt when slamming the bike into top after letting it reach maximum in fourth. The result was a quick wobble from the bike and

PERFORMANCE AND SPECIFICATION

PERFORMANCE

	T3	Le Mans
Maximum speed.....	109 mph.....	122mph
braking from 30 mph.....	27 feet.....	33 feet
Fuel consumption worst.....	51.5 mpg.....	44.5 mpg
best.....	56.5 mpg.....	53.0 mpg
average over test.....	53.9 mpg.....	48.9 mpg
oil consumption.....	800 mpp.....	800 mpp
standing start 1/4 mile.....	15.1 sec.....	13.6 sec
speedo error.....	15 mph fast at 70.....	20 mph fast at 70
Test Weight.....	508 lb.....	482 lb
Front/rear weight distribution		
Front.....	239 lb.....	224 lb
Rear.....	278 lb.....	250 lb

ENGINE:

Type.....	90 degree v-twin transverse pushrod valve fourstroke air-cooled all alloy.	844cc
Displacement.....	844cc	83mm x 78mm
bore and stroke.....	83mm x 78mm	10.2:1
compression ratio.....	9.5:1	80 bhp at 7300 rpm
claimed output.....	68.5 bhp at 7000 rpm	gear type pump
lubrication.....	gear type pump	Twin Dell'Orto THP 36B
carburetors.....	Twin Dell'Orto VHB 30CD	Bosch 14v.20amp alt.
charging.....	Bosch 14v.20 amp alt.	

TRANSMISSION:

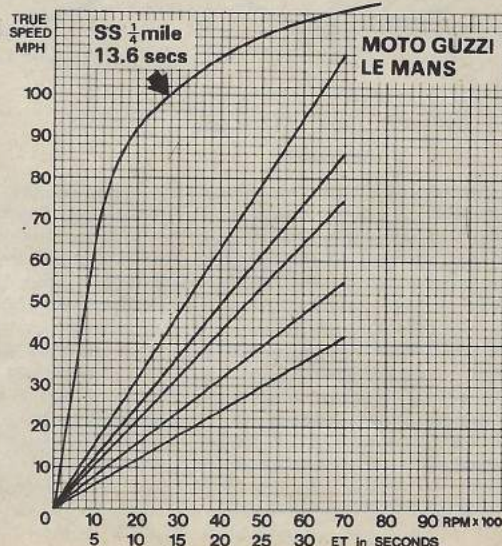
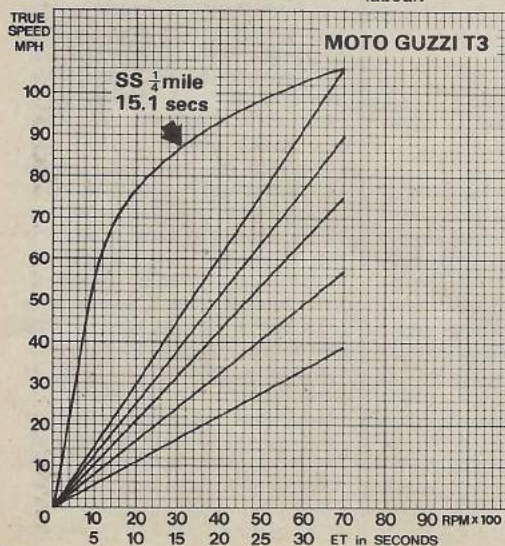
clutch.....	multi-plate (dry).....	multi-plate (dry)
primary drive.....	helical gear.....	helical gear
final drive.....	shaft.....	shaft
gear ratios.....	1:2; 1:1.388; 1:1.047; 1:0.869; 1:0.750	1:2; 1:1.388; 1:1.047; 1:0.869; 1:0.750

CHASSIS:

front tyre.....	3.50 x 18 Continental.....	3.50 x 18 Pirelli Racing tyres
rear tyre.....	4.00 x 18 Continental.....	4.00 x 18 Pirelli Racing tyres
front suspension.....	telescopic fork.....	telescopic fork
rear suspension.....	swinging arm, oil damped coil spring.....	swinging arm, oil damped coil spring
front brake.....	hydraulic disc.....	hydraulic disc
rear brake.....	hydraulic disc.....	hydraulic disc
overall length.....	86.5 in.....	86 in
overall width.....	30.7 in.....	28 in
ground clearance.....	5.9 in.....	5.9 in
fuel tank.....	5.3 gals.....	4.7 gals
oil tank.....	6 pints.....	6 pints

PARTS PRICES: inc VAT

front mudguard.....	£31.50	£28.64
handlebar.....	£15.76	£7.16 each
speedo cable.....	£4.33	£3.94
exhaust system.....	£97.17	£90.02
pistons & rings.....	£55.42	£55.42
cb points.....	£2.11	£2.11
List price.....	£1599	£1999
warranty.....	6 months or 6,000 miles parts and labour.	



to use as well.

Starting was much the same for both bikes, with the exception that the clutch had to be disengaged on the T3 to allow the starter to operate. There is a petrol tap on both sides of the tank, each feeding their respective carburetors, but the chokes are now combined into one on/off lever behind the left cylinder head. A stab of the starter button usually had the motor thumping away merrily first time thanks to the hefty battery and starter motor. Which was just as well since no kick starter is fitted.

The seats on both bikes pivot upwards like a scooter to allow access to the tool roll which lies in a plastic tray over the battery, and while the T3 had a little metal prop to hold the seat up I could see no advantages over the more conventional side pivoted seats of Japanese bikes, that allows much easier access. Metal side panels hide an array of fuses on the left and the master brake cylinder on the right.

Again the speedometer seemed to be calibrated in telegraph poles per hour or miles per endorsement, but its relationship to the speed of the bike was marginally better than the Le Mans — if that's any consolation, a mere 20 per cent inaccuracy on the T3. Anyone who has just paid between £1,600 and £2,000 for a motorcycle surely deserves to know how fast he is travelling in these days of VASCAR and ludicrous speed restrictions.

The well silenced exhaust note is not likely to attract police attention however, as the mufflers keep the noise level down to a pleasantly heartening rumble, and the T3's silencers even have the luxury of chromium plating instead of the go-faster, rust-quicker matt black finish on the Le Mans pipes. Oh yes, and while I'm grumbling about the Le Mans exhausts, I might add that the racy upsweep of the silencers neatly cuts off access to the rear suspension unit adjusters, but these were on their softest setting anyway, and we had no desire to stiffen them further.

Lights and switch gear set up was identical to the Le Mans, so there is no need to cover that ground again. Overall finish was high quality, and the black paintwork gave the T3 a quality appearance. While the T3's designers have overlooked some important details, they have certainly got their sums right with all the major features of the machine, and I found it a very enjoyable motorcycle to ride. For someone who wants a practical everyday workhorse and excellent touring bike with quality, the T3 provides an alternative to BMW.