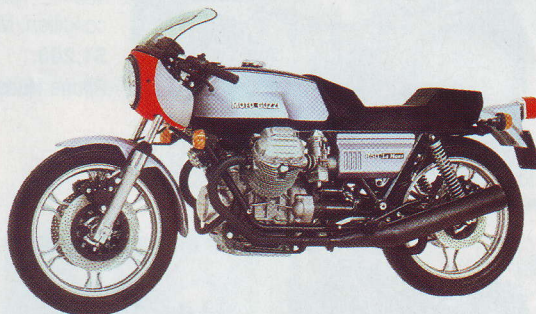


Moto Guzzi Le Mans Mk1



A legend in its own lifetime, the Moto Guzzi Le Mans Mk1 has won countless hearts with its powerful 850cc V-twin motor, sleek muscular looks and solid, reassuring handling.

Its status is underlined the moment you press the electric starter and the high compression V-twin throbs into life. Red line it and the Le Mans will hit 50mph in first, 90mph in third and 125mph in top.

The light action of the dry two-plate clutch allows full use of the five speeds and a low centre of gravity combined with spot on steering angle inspire confidence from three mph to three figure speeds, making the bike a great mile-eater. Throw in a set of brilliant Brembo twin disc front brakes and the plot is hard to resist.

But the sports 850 has its faults. They include erratic Veglia clocks, stiff twist grip action due to heavy carb slide return springs, patchy electrics, whining straight cut gears, and lumpy cams which mean the motor doesn't come on song until the rev counter hits 4000rpm.

But with tatty usable examples going for around £2000 - roughly the same price as a Mk1 cost new in 1976 - few bikes can offer such a package of performance, rideability and value.

Specification

Engine: OHV 844cc 90-degree transverse V twin with 10.2:1 compression ratio and two 36mm Dellorto PHF carburettors with accelerator pumps. Five speed gearbox, shaft and spiral bevel gear final drive. 12V electrics, coil ignition, starter motor.

Chassis: Double cradle frame with removable bottom rails. Moto Guzzi telescopic front fork, preload adjustable twin rear shocks. Twin 300mm Brembo front disc brakes, single 240mm rear disc.

Performance: 80bhp @ 7300rpm, 125mph, 14s 1/4-mile, 40-55mpg

Dimensions: Wheelbase 59in (1497mm), seat height 29.5in (749mm) fuel capacity 5 gallons (18 litres), weight 485lb (220kg)

What to look out for

Good electrical kit is let down by poor connectors, often leading to dubious DIY repairs. Regularly serviced bikes last well but avoid badly maintained or raced examples unless the price is right. The small humped dual seat is prone to break and the shaft drive will sometimes seep oil, but overall a Le Mans is a strong durable bike.

Best buy

Neither the Mk1 nor any of the successive Le Mans models have any bad habits and all feature a larger sump than fitted to their V7 predecessor. Most buyers prefer the looks of the Mk1 to the later versions, so these can attract premium prices.

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| Prices (1976 Mk1) | Immaculate | £3500 |
| | Sound runner | £2500 |
| | Needs attention | £1800 |

Running costs

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|---|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| Oil filter | £5.89 | Head gasket(per pair) .. | £12.84 |
| Brake pads (per disc) | £15.69 | Ignition points | £37.72 |
| Tyres: Front Michelin Macadam 50 100/90 x H18 | £56.97 | | |
| Rear Michelin Macadam 50 110/90 x H18 | £60.68 | | |

Specialists

- Spares GB**, London. Tel: 0181 540 7155
- Motomecca**, Dorset. Tel: 01202 826844
- Motori i Marino**, West Sussex. Tel: 01798 813260
- Corsa Italiana**, London. Tel: 0181 239 7012
- Wessons**, East Sussex. Tel: 01273 621392

Clubs

- Moto Guzzi Club (GB)** Paulette Foyle, 43 Poplar Avenue, Bedworth, Nuneaton, Warwickshire. CV35 9EW. Tel: 01203 730678
- Italian Motorcycle Owners Club (GB)**, Rosie Marston, 14 Rufford Close, Barton Seagrave, Northants, NN15 6RF. Tel: 01536 726385