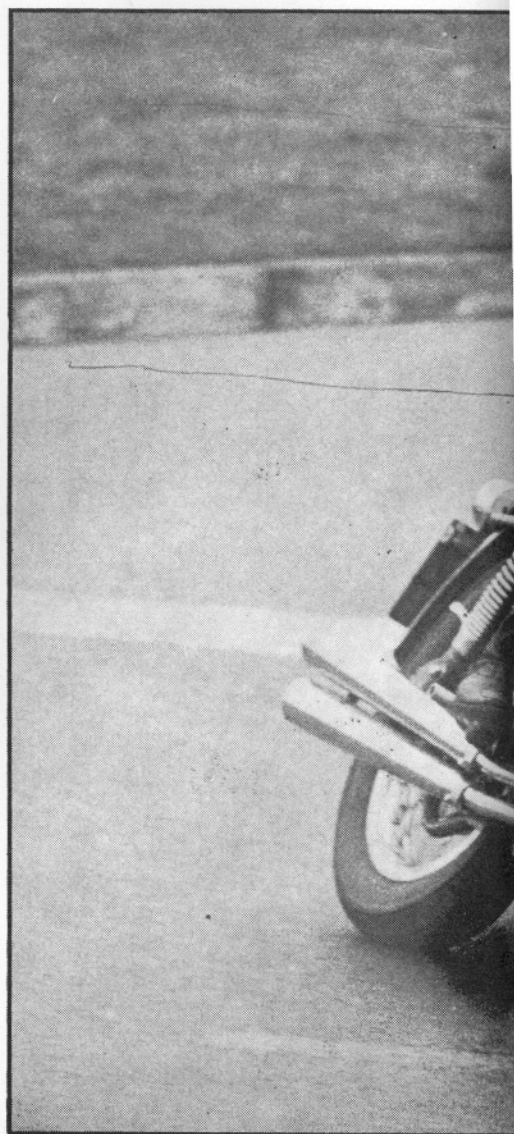
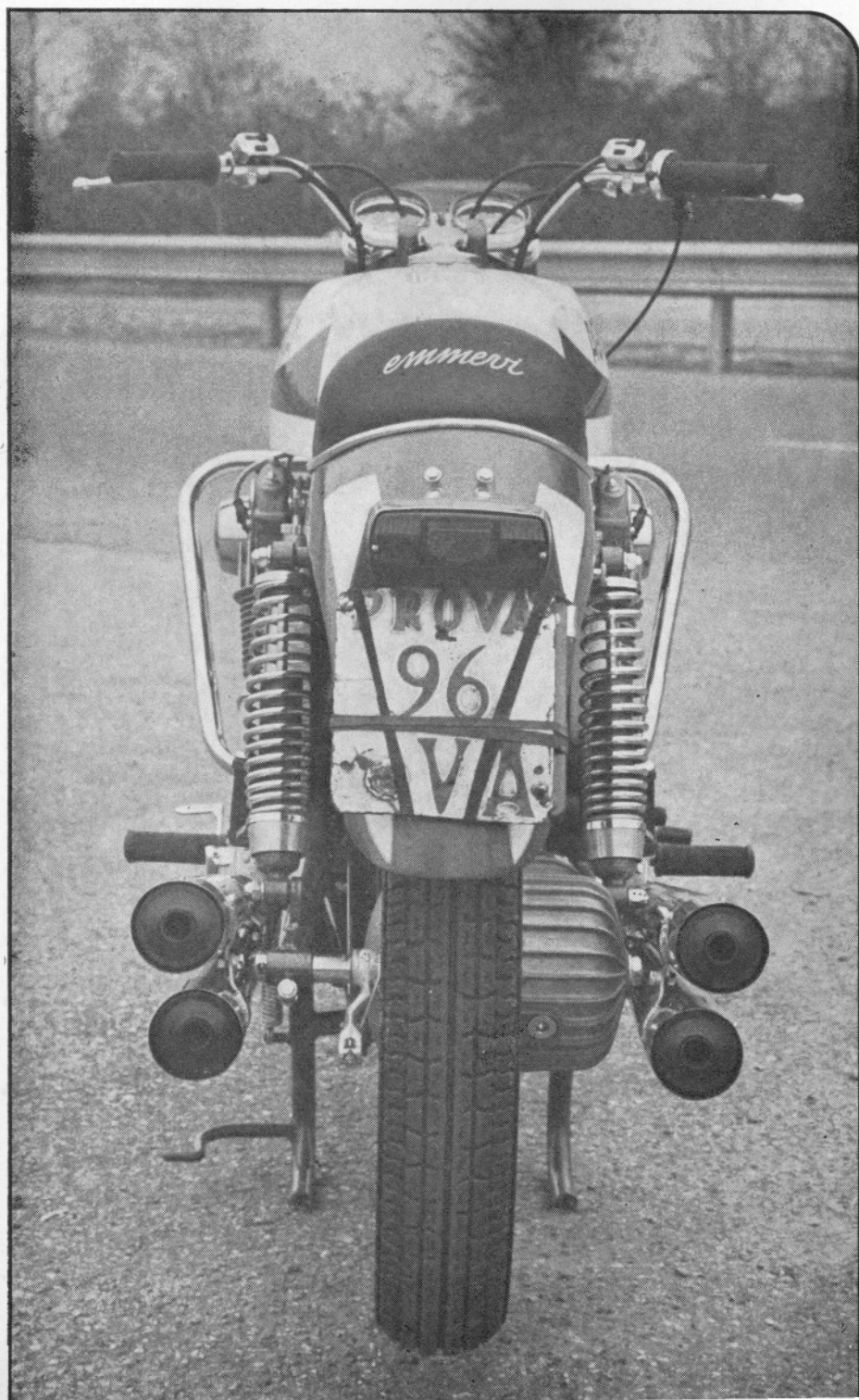
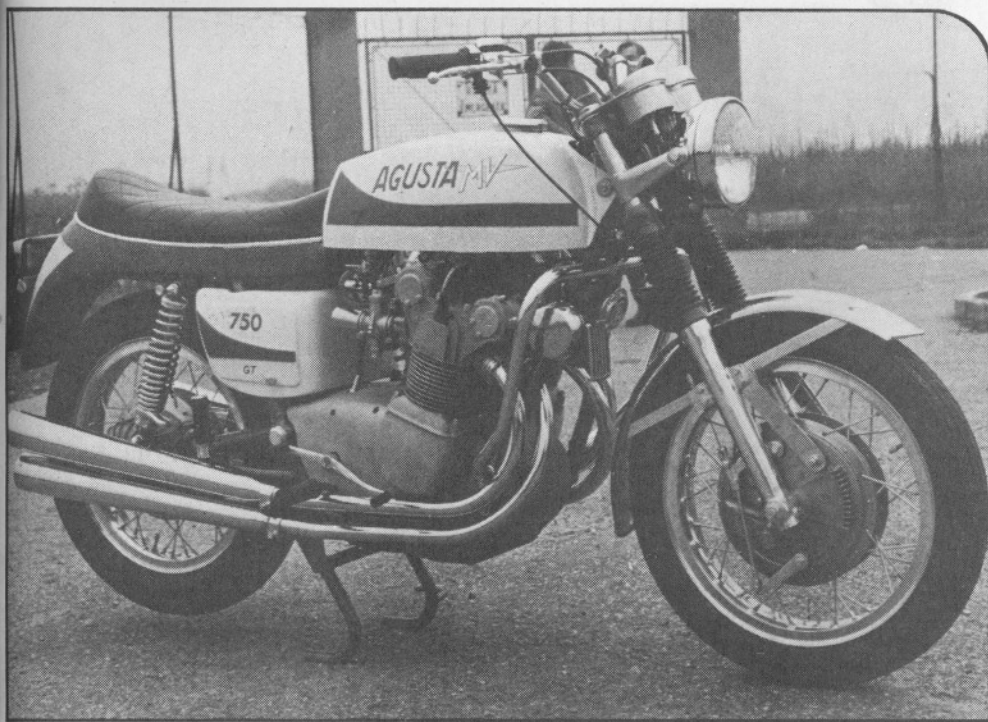




MV AGUSTA





DURING A RECENT TRIP TO Italy I paid a visit to the MV Agusta factory at Gallarate, and after a tour of the works with Race Manager Arturo Magni to see the latest developments, it was suggested over lunch that it was time a member of the Graham family rode an MV again, and would I like to try the latest 750 four-cylinder road machines. Well, it just so happened that I had my helmet and gear with me!

The following morning found me accompanied by a certain notorious Irish journalist and ace tester, noted for his ability to see an exclusive test through steamed up spectacles in dense fog at 400 yards, at the new factory near Gallarate where MV motorcycle assembly is now centred.

Here we saw production of several models from 175 upwards to the 750 four. MVs are not mass produced in the same way as most other machines, the emphasis being on quality and finish, and so they are not the cheapest machines on the market, and demand always exceeds supply.

Of course, the secret of success with MV is **prestige**. Over the years, due to their domination of world-class racing, MV have established a reputation and even a certain mystique, which must be the envy of all motorcycle manufacturers.

It is this exclusive reputation that makes a road-going MV as desirable as, say, a road-going Ferrari, just the name is enough prestige for some.

The 750 machines are produced at the rate of 2-3 per week, each one almost hand built, and thoroughly tested until chief tester Alberto Pagani is satisfied.

The machine is powered of course by an all-alloy four-cylinder twin OHC 750cc motor, developing about 72 bhp DIN at 7900 rpm at the rear wheel. This is transmitted through a five-speed gearbox via an enclosed shaft to a bevel gear final drive, housed in a finned alloy casting in the rear hub. Four Dell'Orto carbs feed the cylinders, and a very quiet electric starter easily fires them all up.

I wondered what my late father would have thought, seeing the engine that he started to develop way back in 1951, now having matured, grown to 750 and powering such a sophisticated road machine. I am sure he would have been impressed.

There are now two versions of the machine in production, the existing 750 Sport, with traditional Italian semi-racing styling and riding position, and a new 750 GT, which is tailored for comfortable touring, with high swept 'bars, longer



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dual seat, crash bars, flashers, etc., and quite different styling. The mechanical spec is the same for both, although the Sport has a higher final drive ratio.

We were able to spend the morning trying both versions of the machine, and after final adjustments to the still-new machines by Alberto, we set off.

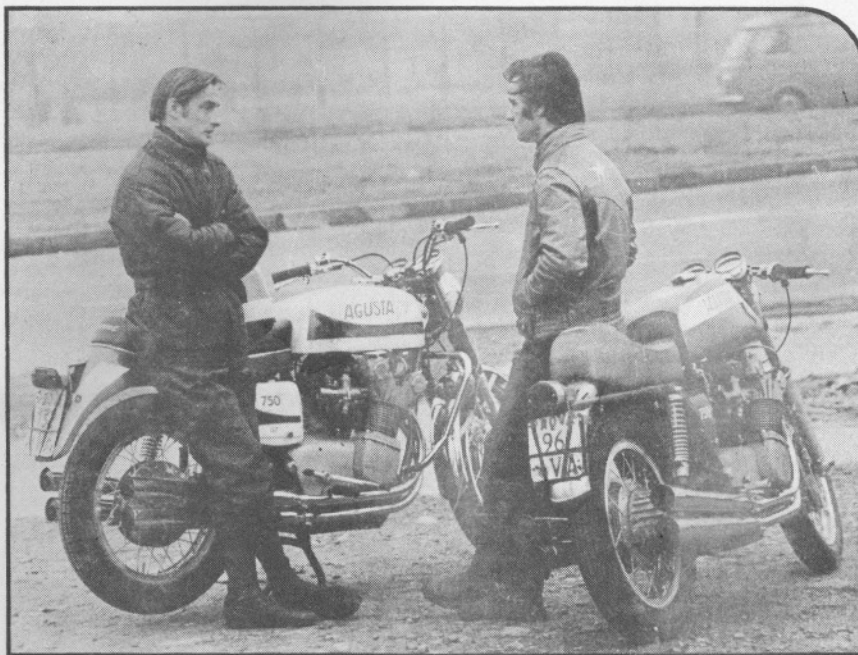
Most of our riding took place in and around Gallarate, and on a quiet stretch of main road and dual carriageway near Malpensa Airport, which enabled impressions of both town and open road conditions to be gained.

I tried the 750 GT first. The test machine was finished in an attractive two-tone cream and gold, and with many parts in chrome or polished alloy it certainly looked impressive. As I started off I was surprised how light and compact the machine felt. Much of this is due to the sensibly narrow dual seat and tank, so many large machines are made to feel more clumsy than need be by the very wide seats and tanks normally fitted. The riding position was very good, especially for town work and moderate cruising, all the controls being very light and smooth. The pleasantly short gear lever and brake pedal gave positive actions.

Most customers for these kinds of machine are usually ex-motorcyclists, now used to powerful cars, but who still desire some of the benefits of a motorcycle, and something a bit special. Therefore refinement and performance are important, as comparison between the 'bike and a fast, expensive car are fairly natural. My own car develops over 360 bhp from 5.7 litres, so I thought the comparison most interesting.

Like a large car, the MV has a delightful dual character, its shaft drive helps to make it very smooth and quiet at low speeds, the engine is very flexible and untemperamental and the machine may be trickled along in top gear like a refined cruiser, pulling happily from 1000 rpm. However, if full use is made of the superb close ratio gearbox, and the engine wound up to 9000 rpm, the machine is instantly transformed into a howling roadburner, able to blow the doors off almost any car in sight. In fact the driver of an Alfa Romeo sports car I came across gave a look of resignation as I blasted past at over the ton and changed up!

With the high 'bars on the GT I found that around 90 mph was the maximum speed for comfort. Above that, wind pressure became more of a problem, lower pattern 'bars would be better I think.



Stuart Graham and Alberto Pagani hold a roadside post mortem on the two MVs.

Handling at all speeds is good, but the touring riding position was not suitable for ambitious cornering.

It was not possible to take proper performance figures, but on a slightly optimistic speedo, speeds in the gears were; 1st 60mph, 2nd 90, 3rd 105, 4th 125, 5th 130. My Chevrolet Camaro Z28 covers a standing ¼ mile in 13 sec, and the MV felt very much the same. This was later confirmed by Alberto.

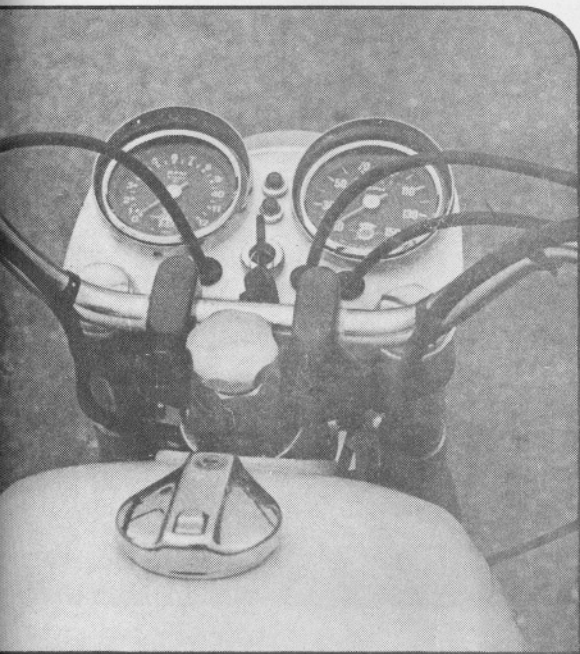
After the GT, the Sport version looked and felt a little more like a racer. In bright red and blue, with its semi-racing riding position of clip-on 'bars, slightly rearset footrests and long narrow racing seat, it looked every inch an Italian thoroughbred. It seemed more natural to bump start the Sport, but as I am getting a bit old these days I climbed aboard and pressed the starter button instead.

With its higher gearing, and sportier riding position, the Sport feels different and encourages faster riding, and feels a little less happy at slow speeds. Mind you, it is still very smooth and tractable.

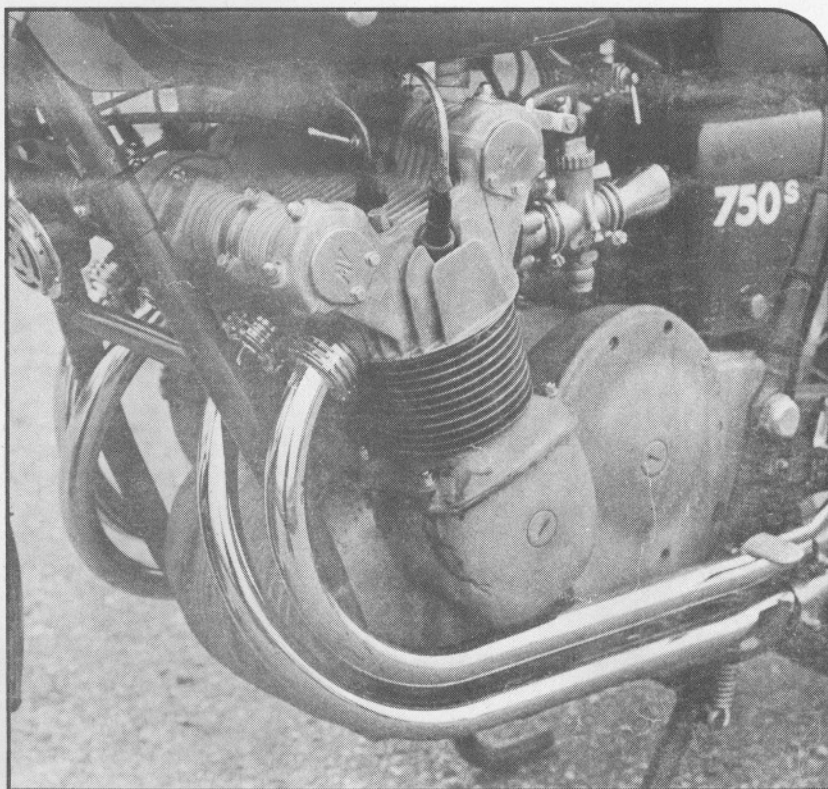
Performance feels very similar to the GT. Starting from rest, a few more revs are required for getaway, but the higher gear-

ing makes the ratios in the gearbox better for fast riding and cornering, and the maximum speed may be a shade higher as it is quite easy to get tucked away. The tank shape looks good but is not perfectly shaped, the sides bulging a little too much at the bottom edge.

Perhaps because the Sport looks a bit of a racer, and would be chosen by the more sporty rider, I tended to be more critical of its handling. At normal speeds it is fine and feels well balanced, but at speeds of 100 mph and more I found a most disconcerting weaving, and after taking one long fast left hander at over the ton, I wished I had not bothered. It brought back memories of a certain six-cylinder 250 I once rode. Some of the problem seems to be the need for stiffer damping, because adjusting the rear dampers showed a marked improvement. I also think Dunlop tyres would help. However, I must not be too critical. MV are aware of this slight problem, and should have it sorted out very soon, and then the machine will be superb. Reaching a perfect marriage between road comfort and the high-speed handling of a racer is very difficult. Come to think of it, I do not know of many racing motorcycles with good all-



The GT's instrument panel: neat and functional with everything to hand, but those neatly routed cables cut across the dials.



The 750S power unit. No, that's not a leaky motor, after flooding two carbs spillage of petrol attracted a lot of road grime.

round handling.

To compare the two versions of this fabulous machine is purely a matter of personal choice. For normal road use and touring, the GT with its lower gearing and more suitable riding position is better, but for real roadburning and sporty appeal then the Sport is the ultimate. Of course the real connoisseur will just have to buy both models.

After a short photographic session, and an amusing spell watching one of the local "ladies of the road" picking up customers quicker than the time it takes to change a film in a camera, we returned the machines to the factory.

With Alberto Pagani in charge of development, and the possibility of works 750 racers, the machines will constantly be improved to maintain them in their position as what must be the world's most exclusive and desirable motorcycle.

Even at a price of around £2000, MV cannot meet the demand, most of the machines going to France and Germany. But they have no intention of increasing production, so the market will always be very exclusive, and only for those who can afford the very best.



MV 750cc FOUR CYLINDER TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

ENGINE

Type: four stroke.
Number of cylinders: four light alloy cylinders and inserted cast iron cylinder barrels two overhead camshafts, operated by gears; Disposition: in line, transversal with motorcycle axis.
Head: light alloy head.
Bore & stroke: 65 × 56mm × 4.
Displacement: 743cc.
Compression ratio: 9.5:1.
Max. horsepower: 76HP S.A.E. at 7900 rpm.
Clutch: multiple disc in oil bath.
Primary drive: helical gears.
Secondary drive: By means of drive shaft and cardan joint on rear hub.
Starting: electric starter.
Gearbox: five speed.
Carburettors: four Dell'Orto UB24B2 e UB24BS2.
Exhaust system: four exhaust pipes and four silencers.
Generator: dynastarter 12v 135w.

Ignition: coil.

Lubrication: forced, with gear pump mesh filter and changeable filter element.

Oil tank: in crankcase containing 3 kg.

FRAME

Type: double cradle.
Front fork: telescopic hydraulic.
Rear suspension: swinging arm and spring load-adjusting shock absorbers.
Front tyre: 3.50 × 18.
Rear tyre: 4.00 × 18.
Front brake: double drum and double cam.
Rear brake: central drum.
Stop switch: on rear brake.
Lighting system: 12v 32 a.h. battery.

PERFORMANCE

Max. speed: 140 mph.
Acceleration: ¼ mile standing start: 14 seconds.