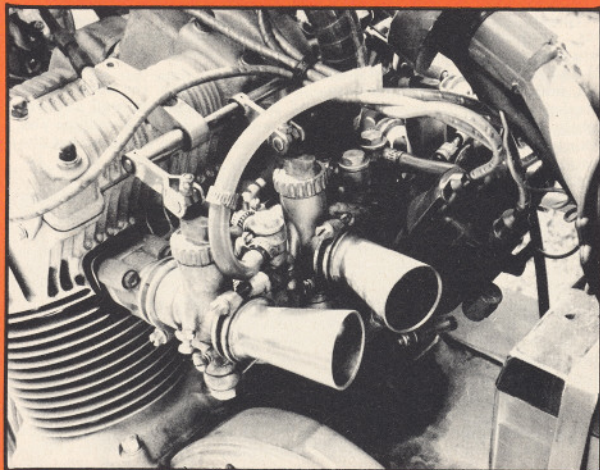


# AGUSTA

*A look at motorcycling's*



*Four Dell'Orto carbs have come from the Ark. The lack of an air filter system makes a mockery of hand-built engine. Car type distributor punches out spark through very long leads.*

The only way most of us are going to be able to afford an Agusta Sport is if one appears on the used bike sales floor. But the price is still high, and how good is it then? KEL WEARNE set out to find out aboard a well-used unit.

## YOU'RE riding.

Fast!

Through the visor of the Racing Mate full-face the edge of the road and the trees on the other side blur as the Cerianis ride the ripples in the bitumen. There's a slight sideways twist as the shaft drive torques the bike over fractionally on full throttle in second and a faint graunch as the right-hand pipes touch the tarmac.

The bike is howling. A flash pinpoints a car coming into the tight right-hander from the opposite direction and you move





# SPORT 750

**marvellous machine after 14,000km**

your right knee in close to the bike, allowing it to drift away from the white line marking the road's centre. And suddenly the world is bright as the bike whips out from under the tree-lined shade into harsh sunlight and straight road.

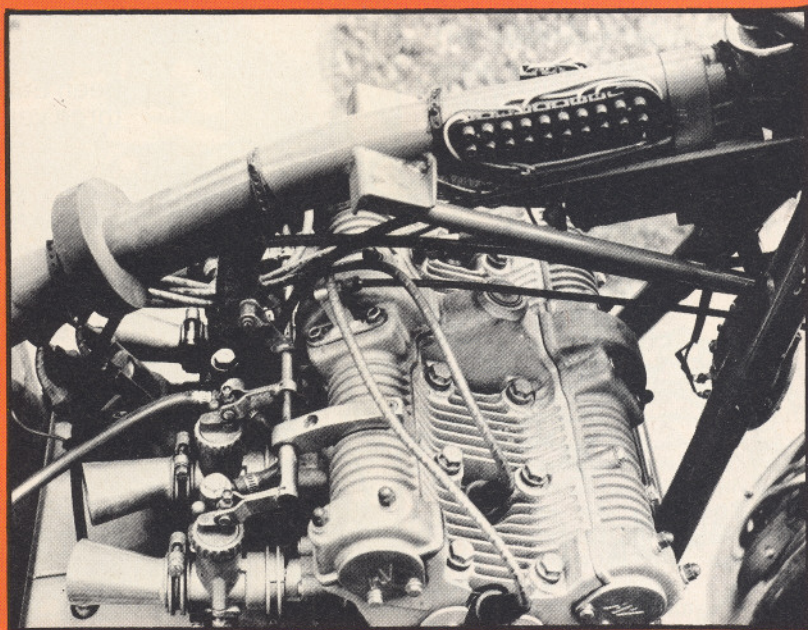
The action seemed dramatic but not very fast, but a glance at the speed and revs forces a double take. Slow? No. Heavy to handle? No. Faster than usual? By a long margin.

Everything was happening faster than normal in that section of road and your senses failed to register things correctly... the bike took time and motion from you, created its own level and you went with it.

Safe, secure and very fast.

Riding the Agusta is meeting reality. You dream of something until it becomes a reality and immediately it changes. It may be better than you imagined, it may be worse, but it is always different. And so is the Agusta in the flesh.

The MV Agusta 750 Sport is in



*Italian wiring horror still lurks under the tank. Nothing marked and no color coding. Cams must be removed for valve adjustment.*



## AGUSTA SPORT 750

the exclusive class of motorcycling. Since they were brought to Australia in 1972 only 15 have been sold. The price is beyond what the average rider can afford — perhaps in the area where being able to afford one is half the reason for buying one.

Our Agusta was in the hands of Trevor Armour, manager of Southern Motors, in South Yarra, Melbourne. The Sport is sitting there waiting for a buyer. The odometer shows 13,700 km which, for a machine of this nature, is irrelevant, but because of that and it being privately owned for two years a full road test, including figures, would not be valid.

It is in the realms of the spirit that the MV belongs; you cannot measure its being in straight mathematical figures, calibrations and stop-watch results. That has been one of Man's problems all along; measure this and measure that... and if ever anything was found that couldn't be measured and graduated and graphed then leave it.

This attitude was frequently demonstrated over the three weeks we rode the bike. It came from people in the street, in many bike shops, from friends and other riders. The massive, pure Italian red, white and blue 750 was rubbished, praised, written off, laughed at, admired and touched. So many different comments, but the real answer was to let some ride it... then there were no more reasons for comment. It seemed a pity that so many couldn't see beyond figures, acceleration curves, top-end speeds and straight-line performance. They missed the MV altogether.

There is no use saying a Kawa

900 will see the MV off — so will quite a few other machines. If MV wanted a "performer" it would sell slickster-shod dragsters. But outright performance ignores the emotional experience of riding and it ignores the numbers game; that some things are more fine for being fewer and being built better.

One thing particularly is noticeable about the MV. It attracts attention. You can ride a 900 Kawa, a 900 BM, a Laverda and even a Big Mutha Harley down the street and you may get nothing but a few loose glances. But the MV Sport doesn't let anyone miss it. The Italian paint job, gaudy red, white and blue tank, red vinyl seat and twin trumpet exhausts, enclosed by a thick, solid red frame demand attention. And if they don't see it, they hear it!

The MV hurls itself out of the GP era, a mellow, powerful, furious, bellowing sound that scorches the brain. It's sad that riding the MV Sport makes you miss some of the sound — beyond 6500 revs it belongs to those behind you with ringing ears.

In understanding why MV builds and sells such machines one should at least know what MV has going for it. Its manufacturing empire includes machinery and helicopters but the late founder's personal interest demanded that motorcycles be raced as a sport, the result of which was a string of world championships right through the '60s and '70s.

The engine of the 750 Sport, a massive cast aluminium twin overhead cam four-cylinder, is based directly on the GP version of the mid-'60s 500 GP four.

One of the reasons the Sport has the great underslung dynamotor behind and below the engine is because the racing engine had no provision for a generator or starter motor to run the road version. The setup has a small pulley which spins the engine over and a larger one spins the generator in automotive

fashion. These two belts can become loose and during the test period we had to tighten the generator belt to provide better charging to the battery.

The MV engineers decided to make the road versions super-reliable and included a shaft drive rather than the chain drive of the GP bikes. That necessitated a heavier engine all round and although the sand-cast aluminium engine is a work of art it is heavy. Its actual history goes back to around 1967 when the first production version made its appearance. At that time it was a 600 but in 1970 when MV released the Sport version it had grown in capacity to a 750 with a bore and stroke of 64 x 56 mm.

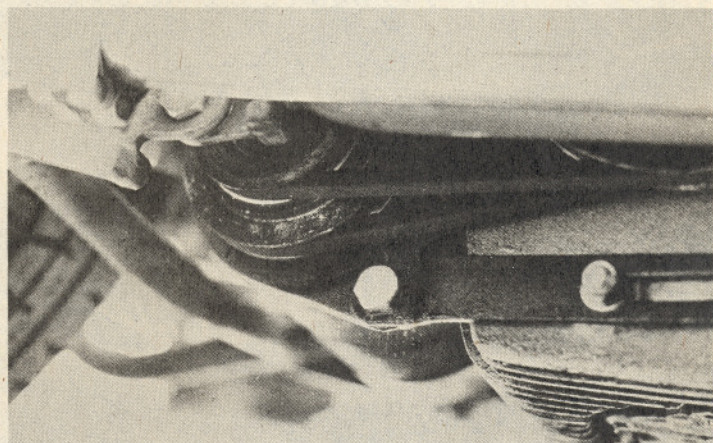
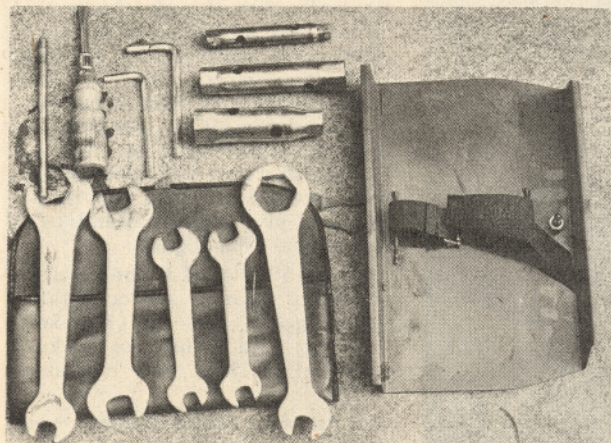
It isn't meant to break and it won't. The crankshaft is a huge built-up monument to craftsmanship. It turns on six main bearings using four rollers for the interior support and two ball-bearings to hold the outer ends. The one-piece rods use needle roller bearings.

But the astonishing manner in which the Italians have built the engine with rollers and needles everywhere (you will not find a plain bearing in the engine) leaves only empty guesses at the reasoning behind the carburettor set-up.

The four 24 mm Dell'Ortos are straight from the Ark! Its setup is unbelievably primitive. The four carbs, complete with velocity stacks but no air cleaners of any description, are fixed by a separate manifold to each cylinder. A four-arm bellcrank is worked by a single cable. From the bellcrank a separate cable hangs over each carb and that falls through a wide open hole in the carburettor cap and moves the slide. In Australia the

*Because of its racing heritage the engine has no provision for lighting or starting. Massive 140 W generator is slung below and behind the engine. One belt drives the starter and the other the generator.*

*Toolkit is held in the seat support itself. Contains adequate selection of tools of fair quality.*





## AGUSTA SPORT 750

dust, grit and water that can enter during normal riding would kill off the internals in a far shorter time than the designers of such an engine would want or expect.

Finish on the MV is exceptional. The paint, the welds and the chrome are all one would expect. The only blemish is the way the MV emblem has been put onto the tank — it's merely a transfer, and unnecessarily susceptible to petrol and scratch damage. The tank itself is a massive stingray-shaped item that matches the tenor of the bulbous MV well. I liked it; in fact I liked the whole appearance of the bike, including the racing footpegs and the red solo seat.

The riding position rates as the best of any larger capacity machine. The relationship to the handlebars and controls and the seat and the semi-rear set footpegs is superb. It offers ideal weight transfer from the arms to the legs once up over 60 km/h. Even around town the position is safe and offers easy and ample road sight. On long country runs the arms do not get tired nor is the upper chest region exposed to the tiring and annoying continual blast of air.

The special clip-on bars help. They are fully adjustable for height along the upper fork legs and for angle for the rider's wrist. Whoever had been riding before me must have had double-jointed wrists and the first thing I had to do was stop at Richmond and adjust the two clip-ons and brake and clutch lever angles.

The second thing that needs care is starting off. The gearing is tall — I repeat *tall*. First gear requires the clutch to be feathered to get the heavyweight off the line. Once

moving, the problem ceases to exist. The other outstanding aspect of the MV is its balance. The bike is heavy but you'd never know it! It just has the right feel at any time, even in trickle-and-brake city peak-hour traffic.

And yet for a couple of days I was not sure. The dream had been dramatically changed. The bike was loud, heavy and expensive. It was only after venturing round favorite pieces of roadway that the MV's essence claimed my attention. The aura is there. The more one rides the more one learns to feel and relate to it all.

The big 750 has no starting system for the manually dexterous individual. The massive battery sitting under the seat powers the generator and starter motor and in three weeks' riding it never failed to start within a few seconds of engaging the starter and after a few coughs and splutters (there is no choke system) it settled for a lumpy idle. After another minute or so the engine was as responsive as ever and could be relied upon to follow the throttle action without hesitation.

The instruments on the MV are like those of many Italian machines and out of character with the bike itself — they're neat enough but do not sit on any one setting long enough to read properly!

But it doesn't take long to discover that city revs are around the 5000 mark and 4500 is needed on the clock before engaging the clutch at the lights. Failure to do so results in a very embarrassing silence as the engine pops to a halt. But on the move the Agusta betrays nothing — you just don't believe you are moving as fast as you are. The traffic around the suburbs slips past easily while you nonchalantly hold 4000 in fourth, assuming the needle variation around the

80 km/h to be inaccurate enough to ignore. But one gradually becomes aware of indications to the contrary and that winding the throttle out in any of the upper three gears gives you licence-loss speeds. The engine responds instantly to the throttle to sacrifice the peace of the neighborhood by wailing up to 9000 without any hesitation whatsoever. The note is blatant and horny. A cameo of sound to suit your mood. At 6000 revs the crescendo funnels into the mind.

The gear lever controlling those five tall ratios is, because of the rearset pegs, actuated by a Johnston rod which is quite without any slop. The throw is positive and light and we got to swing on it a lot — because on the test machine the four leading-shoe Ceriani brake at the front ran out of real power suddenly. No warning, just a sudden hardening of the lever action and a dead feel at the front without any other slowing action. It's all part of the racing heritage. The MV can be used to its fullest if the rider is prepared to live with gearlever gymnastics to help slow, and to ride the limit on the corners.

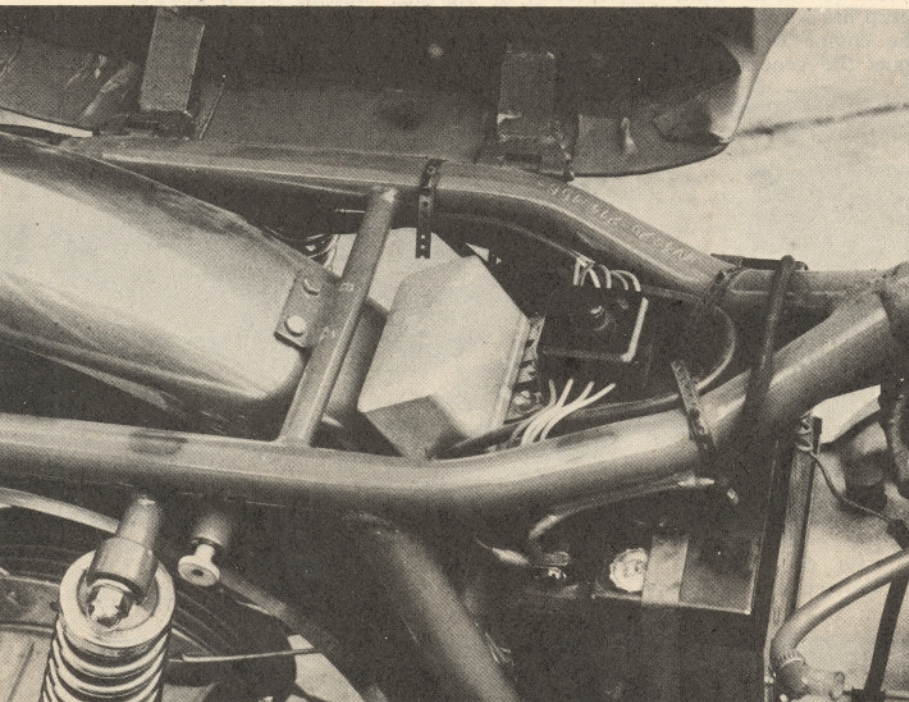
We decided to investigate the slightly disappointing performance of the brakes and had a quick look inside. After the 13,700 km clocked up they needed new linings and there is no doubt braking performance could be much better than that of the test machine. We emphasise that it did the job of reducing speed adequately. It is just that we're used to a brake at the front that can bring your eyeballs out to the visor at a dab of the index and middle finger.

The MV engineers obviously know how to set up a four-cam stopper to do just that, but it is performance at the price of sensitivity and the riders able to afford the 750 are not those who really want a hair-trigger brake on their ego/tourers.

There are things on the MV that are really nice though, things that do not *have* to belong to the upper echelons of motorcycling. Like the handgrips, which are a clear neoprene material that is the best going and the Magura controls and the well-padded and formed seat that allows a solo plenty of space to move around on (and can take a pillion if you are real friends) and the potent headlight.

The 750 proved to be a thirsty beast in nearly all conditions, returning a low of 11.3 km/l (32 mpg) and a best of 12 km/l (34 mpg). That is consistent

*Seat hinges to reveal electrics — but space for anything else!*





through both city traffic and country wind-outs.

The MV has very little vibration. What there is shows in the rearview mirror at low idle and early revs in the mid-range gears. And you soon learn to leave the low-down power in the wind — the MV Sport needs revs to run the way your dreams expect.

It will do it, and do it well. Do it with grace and ease. But to extract the last bit you need to have a racer's heart, revving the engine to 9000 in third and fourth then holding the throttle flat in fifth with the wind rush beating your helmet against your chin as you "chat" on the tank to keep it winding.

And the bike is fast. Faster than most machines and capable of sustaining that performance for long periods. And all the while feeling as firm as ever. That's why it's an MV.

The MV Sport is a total and sensual commitment to the last great era of GP racing — and that is just the way MV designed it to be. The uniquely Italian parts of it are

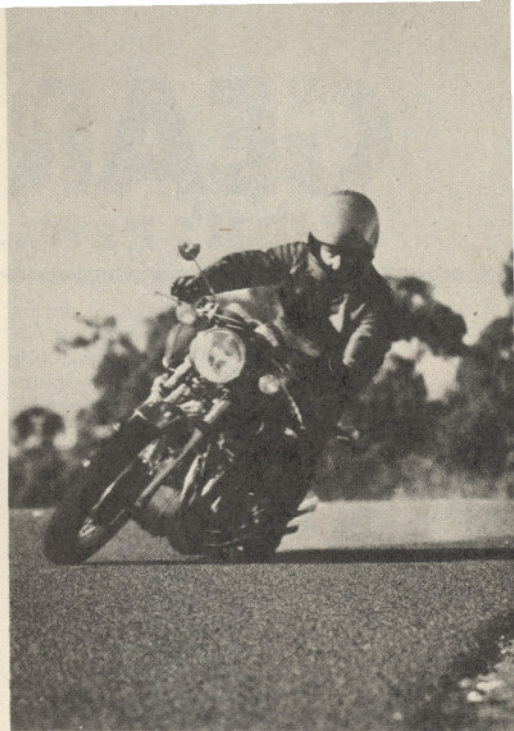
there — not to be ignored but to become the talking points. The strange Italian wiring with no coding (the right-hand front indicator decided all by itself just when it would work during the three weeks, even though the others worked perfectly all the time). And our test bike had the sidecovers missing, loudly displaying the gross battery.

But the MV Sport experience is something more than mere riding. It is proof that there is little point in comparing the MV to anything around (unless someone decides to build a TZ700 road bike). And a chance to find out where you belong in the bloodstream of bikes. Its exclusivity is only part of the charm.

As Gerry O'Brien, general manager of Milledge Yamaha said after taking it for a fast spin for half an hour: "If I had the money I'd have one. I'd buy one, not just to own one but because it's unreal."

No, it's not unreal.

But it possesses something beyond the purely tangible.



*Heavy MV Agusta 750 Sport is out of a dream. Stable, superbly balanced and engineered, the sheer ability is limited by ground clearance on the pipe fittings.*

## SPECIFICATIONS

**MAKE** ..... MV AGUSTA  
**MODEL** ..... 750 Sport  
**PRICE** .... \$3900 (machine tested for sale at \$2800)  
**WARRANTY** .... 6 months/10,000 km (parts only)  
**ENGINE:** Air cooled, wet sump, four cylinder in-line, four stroke, mounted transverse across the frame. Twin overhead camshafts, driven by straight cut gears, turning on ball bearings. Cast aluminium barrels and heads, steel cylinder liners. Built-up crankshaft supported on six main bearings, needle roller big ends and plain bush bearings on small ends.  
 Bore x stroke ..... 64 mm x 56 mm  
 Capacity ..... 743 cm<sup>3</sup>  
 Compression ratio ..... 10:1  
 Claimed power ..... 49.2 kW (66 hp) at 8000 rpm  
 Lubrication ..... Wet sump, gear driven oil pump  
 Carburetion ..... 4 x 24 mm Dell'Orto UB24  
 Air filter ..... Nil  
 Ignition ..... 12 V battery and automotive type distributor/coil

Starting system ..... Electric

**TRANSMISSION:** Helical cut gear through wet multi-plate clutch to five speed indirect gearbox. Right foot change, one up and four down. Final drive by swinging arm mounted driveshaft.

**RATIOS (Overall:1):**

1st ..... 11.85  
 2nd ..... 8.44  
 3rd ..... 6.46  
 4th ..... 5.50  
 5th ..... 4.96

**FRAME:** Tubular steel, welded, double cradle.

**SUSPENSION:**

Front: Ceriani telescopic forks, internal coil springs, two way oil damped, 130 mm (5.0 in.) travel.

Rear: Swinging arm, spring/damper units, 90 mm (3.8 in.) travel. Four pre-load settings.

**WHEELS, TYRES AND BRAKES:**

Front: Alloy rim, 3.50 x 18, Metzler semi-rib pattern, Ceriani four leading shoe drum brake 230 mm (9.0 in.) x 30 mm (x2) (1.20 in.).

Rear: Alloy rims, 4.00 x 18, Metzler semi-block pattern, single leading shoe drum brake 196 mm (7.8 in.) x 45 mm (1.8 in.).

## ELECTRICS:

Source ..... External generator (belt driven)  
 Lighting ..... 12V, 140 Watts

## CAPACITIES:

Fuel tank ..... 20.2 litres (4.4 gal)  
 Engine oil ..... 4.7 litres (8.2 pints)

## DIMENSIONS:

Dry weight ..... 245 kg (540 lb)  
 Wheelbase ..... 1422 mm (56.5 in.)  
 Overall length ..... 2108 mm (83.5 in.)  
 Overall width (footpegs) ..... 635 mm (25 in.)  
 Swinging arm length ..... 432 mm (17 in.)  
 Seat height ..... 775 mm (30.5 in.)  
 Footpeg height ..... 266 mm (10.5 in.)  
 Ground clearance ..... 138 mm (5.4 in.)

## PERFORMANCE

### ACCELERATION:

0-100 km/h ..... 5.8 sec  
 Standing 400 metres ..... 14.4 sec/149 km/h  
 Maximum speed ..... 186 km/h (116 mph)

### FUEL CONSUMPTION:

Overall ..... 12.3 km/l (35 mpg)  
 High speed ..... 11.2 km/l (32 mpg)  
 Cruising ..... 13.5 km/l (39 mpg)

### BRAKING:

From 50 km/h ..... 9.4 m (31 ft)  
 From 100 km/h ..... 43 m (140 ft)

## HOW DO THE FINER POINTS SCORE (Out of 10)

Instrumentation ..... 6  
 Comfort ..... 9  
 Tool kit ..... 9  
 Quality of finish ..... 9  
 Vibration ..... 9  
 Lighting ..... 7  
 Positioning of controls ..... 7  
**TEST BIKE SUPPLIED BY:** Southern Motors,  
 Dandenong Road, Carnegie, Vic, 3163.