

OWNER SURVEY

Moto Guzzi

850 and 1000

Handling Is This Big V-Twin's Specialty.

Moto Guzzi isn't as well known in this country as many of the other motorcycle manufacturers, but they have a history and tradition second to none. Carlo Guzzi and Giorgi Parodi started the company after World War I with (according to Geoff Wood), "a few employees, a water wheel-powered lathe and a lot of determination." From 1921 to 1957, Moto Guzzis set 134 World Records and won 3329 international races and 14 World Championships. Twenty-three years ago, Guzzi had a 320 lb., 178 mph, water cooled V-Eight and even earlier they had a dohc inline Four with shaft drive, water cooling and fuel injection!

But enough of the past. (For a complete Moto Guzzi history, check the February, 1967 *Cycle World*.) We know Guzzi can make a great racing bike, but what is a Guzzi street machine like? According to one owner, it is a "very versatile bike—have cruised at 110 mph and then strapped a chain to it to haul logs for firewood out of the woods." Typical? Let's see what the other owners have to say.

Seventy-seven owners took part in this Moto Guzzi survey and they told us about their experiences with 11 Eldorado 850s, 33 850 Ts and T3s, 21 Le Mans models, five V-1000 I-Converts, two police models and five unspecified model 1000s. Seventy-one percent were purchased new.

Many of the owners say their Guzzis are good all-purpose motorcycles and the numbers bear this out. Most of the models in this survey are touring-oriented, but pleasure riding and commuting are more popular uses. Eighty-two percent ride their Guzzis for fun, 74 percent depend on them for transportation and 71 percent use them for long distance riding. Four percent do street or cafe racing and 3 percent compete in road races.

Moto Guzzi owners have a riding style as hard as Suzuki GS750 owners and exceeded only by owners of the Kawasaki 900/1000. Eleven percent of the owners ride very hard, 50 percent ride moderately hard, 35 percent are average and only 4 percent ride gentler than average.

The Guzzis may be ridden fast ("I refuse to go less than 80 mph on highways") but most accumulate miles at about the same rate as most of the other bikes we've surveyed. The new bikes have an average of 17,600 miles on the odo, with some as high as 80,000. The used machines aver-

age 10,800 miles, so the average Moto Guzzi in our survey has covered 15,600 miles. Over 1,200,000 miles have been covered by the Guzzis in our survey.

Individual Moto Guzzi owners ride from 1500 to 30,000 miles per year, with an average of 9200 miles per year. Fuel economy figures range from 24 to 60 mpg, but the overall average is about equal to the BMWs and Harleys at 45 mpg.

Maintenance is apparently no problem on the Moto Guzzi, as 72 percent of the owners told us their bikes are very easy to work on. Twenty two percent said average, and 6 percent labeled the servicing difficult. Of the bikes we've surveyed, only the BMWs (85 percent very easy) are easier to work on. As one rider said, "If you can't handle this, go back to a BSA Bantam and start again."

Parts availability isn't the Moto Guzzi's best suit, although it isn't all that bad. The numbers are: 25 percent always available, 53 percent mostly available, 14 percent sometimes hard to find and 6 percent always hard to find, placing the Moto Guzzis about even with the Yamaha 750 Triple and trailing the other bikes in our surveys.

Twenty-two percent of the Moto Guzzis have been idle while waiting for parts, again a figure close to the Yamaha 750 (21 percent) and worse than the other surveyed machines. One owner said he got many of his parts at a local auto parts store. Average wait for Moto Guzzi parts was 35 days, compared to 32 days for the Yamaha.

Maybe it's the ease of maintenance, or perhaps the scarcity of Moto Guzzi dealers, but more of the Moto Guzzi owners do their own maintenance than the owners of any of the other bikes we've surveyed. Forty-one percent always do their own work and the same number usually do. Sixteen percent of the owners sometimes service their motorcycles and the remaining 2 percent always leave it to the dealer.

Dealer rating is another area where the Guzzis come out about even with the Yamaha 750. Thirty-six percent got a very good rating, 23 percent good, 24 percent fair, 4 percent poor and 13 percent were given a thumbs down very poor rating. Attitude makes the difference, with the very good dealers doing all they can to be helpful, while the poorly rated dealers are more interested in sales than service.

Even though maintenance in general is easy, there are a few problems reported by the owners. Seventeen percent dislike the oil filter location inside the crankcase, which makes changing it a hassle, 12 percent say the timing is difficult to set or must be set frequently, 10 percent complain of difficult access to the air cleaner and 5 percent had problems with setting the carburetors or with oil leaks. Forty three percent had no problems with their Moto Guzzis.

Under other than routine maintenance, eight areas were listed by 5 percent or more of the owners. Eighteen percent had miscellaneous seal leaks, 9 percent had to replace either the speedometer/tachometer cables or control cables, 8 percent had problems with the clutch or battery, 6 percent had transmission troubles and 5 percent each required repairs to the wiring or the handlebar switches.

As befits a touring bike, Moto Guzzi has an excellent record for reliability. According to the owners, only 8 percent of the Guzzis stranded their owners. This places the Moto Guzzi second on our reliability list, edging out the BMWs (9 percent), but still behind the Suzuki GS750 (5 percent). Breakdown reasons include the alternator, distributor, wiring, battery, head gasket and rear drive unit.

Hints? We've got a million of 'em, even though one owner told us, "none needed—it's as straightforward as a '56 six-cylinder Chevy." Most common suggestion is to keep it carefully tuned (carbs synched, timing and valves set, etc.) for smoothest running. The owners disagree on valve settings. One said to set the intake and exhaust valves at 0.005 and 0.007 inches, one said 0.006 and 0.008 and another said that some valve clatter is normal and the valves should not be set tighter than the factory specs. Other suggestions include shopping around for the parts prices, joining the Moto Guzzi National Owners Club (P.O. Box 93, Sylvan Grove, Kansas 67481), torquing the cylinder heads during dealer prep and at 500 miles, updating the shifter spring with a replacement part, venting the rear drive unit, carrying an extra clutch cable, shifting slowly and not downshifting while cornering fast as the engine braking will break the rear tire loose (using the brakes while heeled over is okay), and replacing the sidestand with the police model stand.



Judging by the owners' comments, Moto Guzzis don't need much in the way of modifications. Thirty-eight percent have been left stock, and the only modifications listed by 5 percent or more of the owners are: quartz-halogen headlight, 23 percent; handlebars, 14 percent; seat, 9 percent; exhaust pipes, 6 percent and extra taillights, 5 percent.

Even though they don't modify their bikes much, Guzzi owners do add a fair number of accessories. Fairings (58 percent) are the most popular, followed by saddlebags (34 percent), luggage racks (29 percent), air filters (25 percent), travel trunks (18 percent), shocks (12 percent), backrests and sissybars, driving lights and rear view mirrors (each with 10 percent), CB (9 percent), air horns and radios (8 percent each), tank bags, or extra instruments (6 percent each) and crashbars (5 percent). Only 14 percent of the Moto Guzzis had no accessories.

The especially good accessories are all familiar names—Vetter fairings (rated highly by nine riders), Wixom fairings (five), K&N air filters (five), Cibie headlights (four), VDO gauges (three) and Eclipse tank and duffel bags (three). No

products were called unsatisfactory by more than one rider.

When we asked about best features, we got replies like, "Hell Man, it's a Guzzi—Handling! Brakes! Power! Ask Mike Baldwin!" Handling ("like a slot car") leads the list with 69 percent of the owners listing it as a best feature. Thirty-one percent like the ease of maintenance and 31 percent also like the reliability. The brakes (including Moto Guzzi's integral braking system) got high marks from 30 percent of the owners, 27 percent appreciate the comfort, and 19 percent like the shaft drive. Other best features include looks (18 percent), power ("will in fact go 125 mph—don't tell Claybrook") and ride quality (17 percent each), large gas tank and fuel economy ("... filled up in Dubuque, Iowa ... next gas stop was Quincy, Ill. Try that on your Sportster, Bob") listed by 13 percent each, smoothness (9 percent), the engine, the riding position, the longevity and the seat (6 percent each), pride of ownership ("... a two-wheel Ferrari") mentioned by 6 percent and the sound and the quietness (6 percent each).

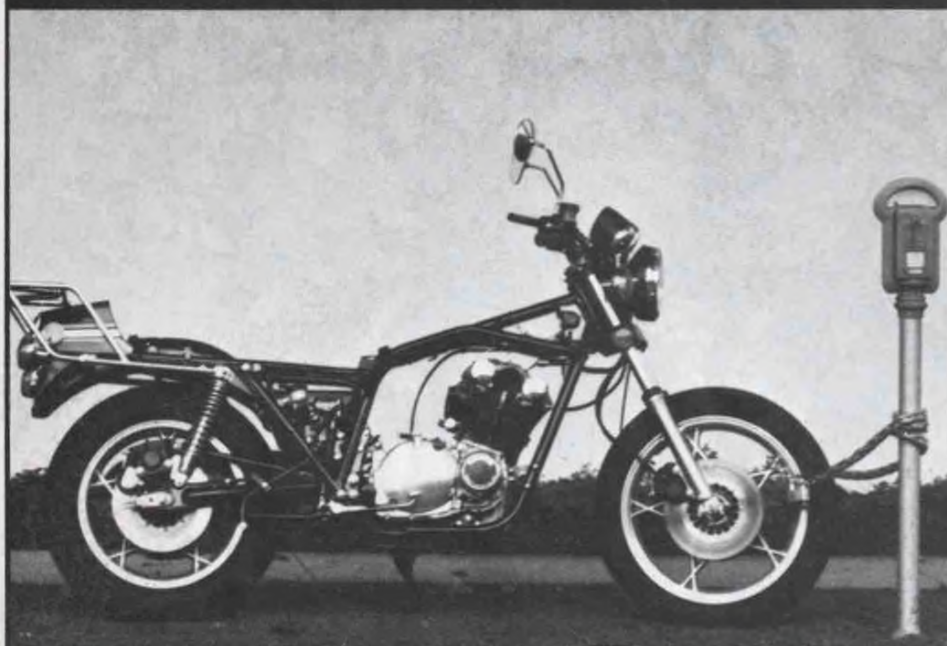
There is much less agreement about the Guzzi's worst features. Vibration and the

handlebar switches irked 12 percent of the owners, the side and center stands bothered 10 percent, 9 percent couldn't stand the seat, 8 percent don't like the need for premium gasoline, 6 percent each don't like the weight, the finish quality, the instruments or the shifting and the brakes, difficult oil filter access and the lack of a trip odometer on some models were each mentioned by 5 percent.

What would they change? "The national speed limit" said one. Other desired changes include the seat and the handlebar switches (9 percent each), electronic ignition, easier air filter access, brake changes and a quartz-halogen headlight (5 percent each) and the original tires, an odo trip meter and better carbs and better side and center stands (4 percent each).

On the topic of owner loyalty, we got a lot of comments like, "I'd buy another one! Won't sell this one though." Eighty-seven percent of the owners said they'd buy another Guzzi, putting it a tick behind the Kawasaki (88 percent), but well ahead of Harley-Davidson (78 percent). Seventy-four percent would get another of the same model. As the riders told us, "We go

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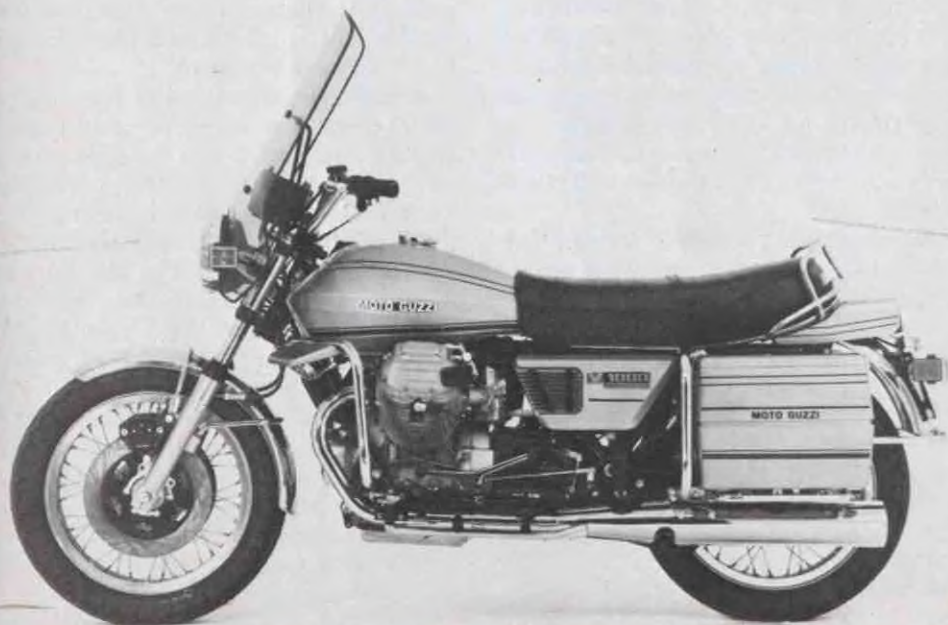
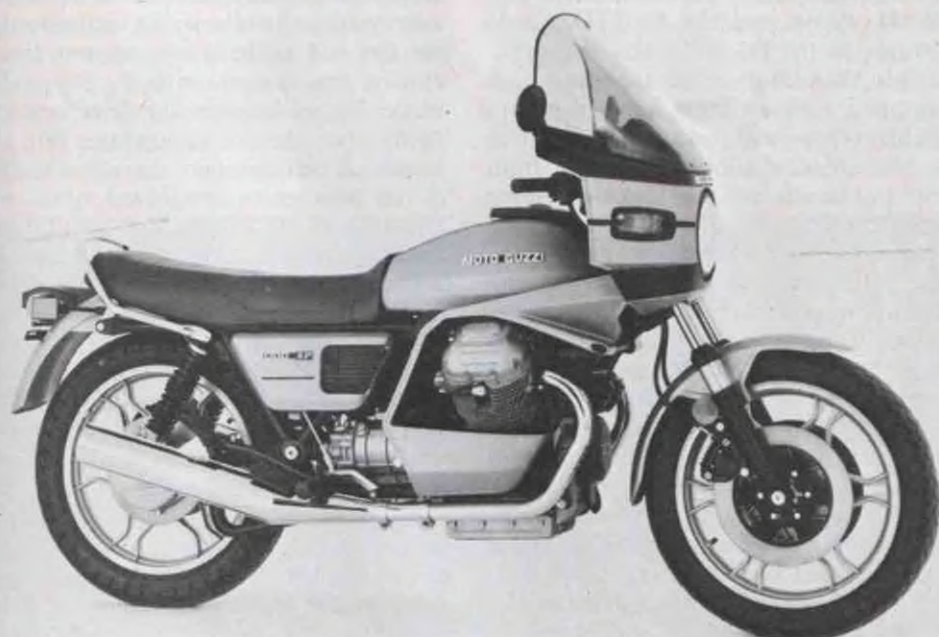
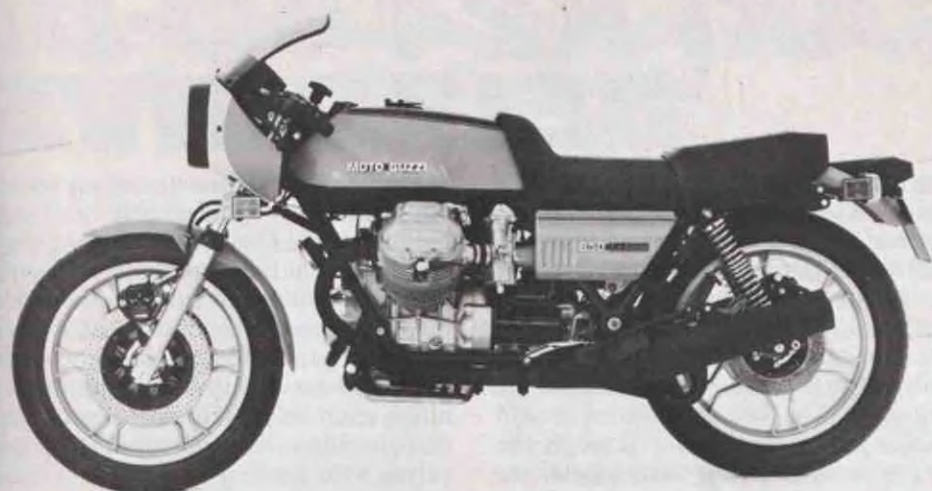


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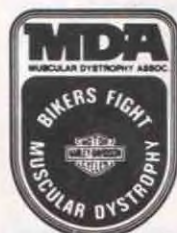
out in the middle of the night for a bloody mary. We deliver parts and papers for the company. We pick the kids up after work. We drive a lot. Heat, rain, snow, cold. We camp out. We bait boy racers on back roads. We surprise old men at road rallies. I think my Guzzi and I enjoy each other an awful lot" and "P.S. And now I think I'll go for a ride!"

Moto Guzzi Owner Survey

Bought new	75%
Bought used	29%
Average mileage	15,600
Types of riding	
Commuting and transportation ...	74%
Touring	71%
Pleasure	82%
Road Racing	3%
Riding style	
Very hard	11%
Moderately hard	50%
Average	35%
Gentler than average	4%
Miles per year	9200
Fuel economy	45 mpg
Serviced by owners	
Always	41%
Usually	41%
Sometimes	16%
Never	2%
Ease of maintenance	
Very easy	72%
Average	22%
Difficult	6%
Parts availability	
Always available	25%
Mostly available	53%
Sometimes hard to find	14%
Always hard to find	8%
Dealer rating	
Very good	36%
Good	23%
Fair	24%
Poor	4%
Very poor	13%
Ever broken down	8%
Had to wait for parts	22%
Average wait for parts	35 days
Maintenance problems	
Oil filter access	17%
Ignition timing	12%
Air cleaner access	10%
Oil leaks	5%
Carb adjustment	5%
Best features	
Handling	69%
Reliability	31%
Ease of maintenance	31%
Brakes	30%
Comfort	27%
Worst features	
Switches and wiring	12%
Vibration	12%
Side and center stands	10%
Seat	9%
Needs premium gasoline	8%
Would buy another Moto Guzzi	87%
Same model	74%



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For details, see your local Harley-Davidson® dealer, or write "Bikers of America Fight MD," P. O. Box 653, Milwaukee, Wisc. 53201. We'll send you information on how you or your club can get involved.

Come on out and join the fight against MD. It's a good cause, a good way to do something positive for your community and for motorcycling. And it's a great way to have some fun.

**BIKERS OF AMERICA
FIGHT AGAINST MD.**