

Suzuki GS750

A Four-Stroke Four From The Folks Who Brought You All Those Two-Stroke Threes.

LUNCH BREAK in a small Idaho town. Six Suzuki GS750s, sparkling through the dust of 300 fast miles, parked in a row on Main Street. Up strolls the town's Suzuki dealer. He walks 'round and 'round. He looks happier and happier. "Sell mostly dirt bikes," he says, "not much call for anything else. But these are gonna sell themselves."

No doubt. To say the GS750 is something new from Suzuki is one strong understatement. The GS750 is a Four from the folks who brought you all those Threes, a four-stroke from the home of the two-stroke, a street bike from the world's motocross champions, an invasion of rival turf by a company which sells mostly to old friends.

The GS750 is also one fine motorcycle. Begin with the engine . . . strike that. Begin with the obvious, that the Suzuki cross-mount, inline, four-stroke, 748cc, high-performance Four is, like the GS750 itself, very like at least one other motorcycle, the name of which need not be mentioned here.

This comes as no surprise to Suzuki. The GS750 engine breaks no new ground. Rather, it is a conventional engine, based on established practice and carefully refined to meet or beat its older rivals.

Suzuki's 750 is oversquare, that is, relatively large-bore and short-stroke, allowing large valves and high engine speeds without undue wear. The crankshaft is carried by five roller bearings with a sixth ball bearing to cushion lateral thrust. Primary drive is via straight-cut gears between cylinders three and four, so the engine is as narrow as possible and the crank can be properly braced against stress. There are two valves per cylinder, double overhead camshafts and a 4-into-2 exhaust, with a muffler on the left for cylinders one and two, a muffler on the right for three and four. The four Mikuni carburetors use 26mm venturis, on the small side for reasons of smoothness and economy. The timing chain has a tensioner that adjusts itself; valve stem clearance is set with shims, which in turn can be removed and replaced with the camshafts installed; oil level in the wet sump is monitored with a sight gauge in the left engine side plate.

Ignition is conventional battery and coil, less advanced than CDI perhaps, but also easier to service and diagnose. The 8.7:1 compression ratio allows use of no-lead or low-lead fuel, and there's positive crankcase ventilation for reduced emissions. Obviously

Suzuki is prepared to cope with any federal regulations liable to arrive within the next few years. The 750 is smooth at all times and will pull top gear from 1500 rpm to the 9000 rpm redline, with the power coming on strongest above seven thou.

There are no official power and torque figures, although Suzuki technical types reckon the 750 is good for about 60 bhp in production trim. The experience of a few cool mornings during introductory riding sessions indicates a certain coldness of the blood, but then (nudge) we'd sort of expect that, eh?

The gearbox and drive train are equally conservative and refined: five-speeds, spaced for city to open road, a light clutch pull and smooth engagement. While final drive is by chain, the GS750 does not have the slack and lurch so often found in Honda's system. Not even the Suzuki engineers appear to know how this was done: "We did it right," is all they say.

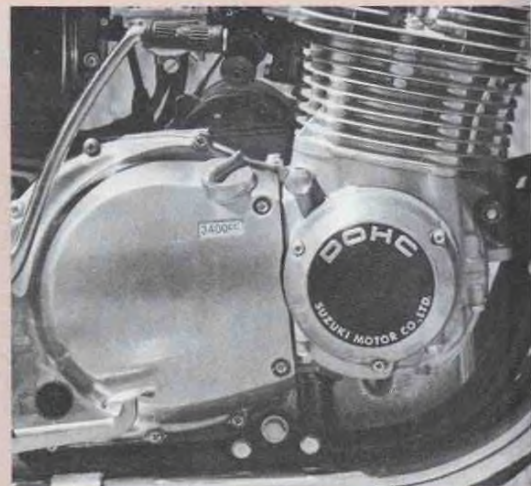
As you'd probably expect, the frame and suspension are conventional in concept, so much so that there isn't much to describe beyond token comments on single down-tube, swinging arm with oil-and-air shock absorbers, front forks like any other front forks, etc.

The details are different. One neat touch is that the swinging arm swings in the frame on roller bearings rather than bushings. The rollers allow less flex and thus less twisting of arm in frame, the source of dreaded wobble during hard riding. Next comes extra travel front and rear. Then there are low spring rates, also front and rear. The relatively soft springs are allowed by the relatively long travel, and both combine to give a far more comfortable ride than one expects from a mass-produced road bike.

Brakes are nice big discs, front and rear. The same theme applies to the brakes, i.e., they are pretty much what everybody else already has, they are newly engineered for this bike and they seem on first impression to work well.

Styling is, well, look at the pictures. Appearance is mostly subjective. Some people like some things, others like other things. As an objective comment, the GS750 does look new and contemporary. Major thing about that is the rear fender. Suzuki calls it integrated, for which the press must be thankful, as it becomes tiring writing about cafe-racer-inspired this or that day after day. Integrated is a new word in this context and

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Sight gauge just above the rear brake lever allows rider to check level of engine oil without the bother of a dipstick.



Rear disc brake should prove to be a strong bargaining lever against rival multi-cylinder models.



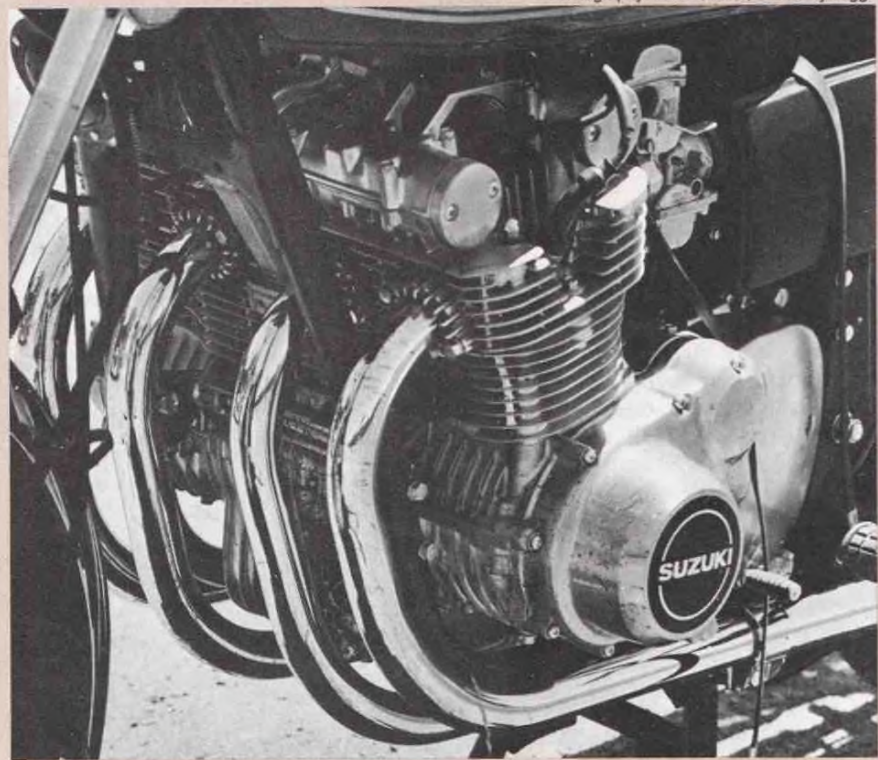
Speedometer and tachometer are canted toward center and at night are illuminated in red, for improved vision.



Photography: Allan Girdler, D. Randy Riggs

Suzuki's GS750 is completely new, styled more in keeping with rival four-stroke road bikes from other companies than with the ornate road Suzukis of the past and present. Integral rear fender is an especially nice touch.

Conventional four-stroke Four has double overhead camshafts. Exhaust pipes from cylinders one and two join into the left-hand muffler and cylinders three and four use the right-hand muffler.



Battery, toolkit and registration papers are secure beneath the seat. For additional stowage, the rear fender piece has a folding door and enough room for riding gloves and such.

Lettering by Charles Schmidt

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