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October 1994

On sale September 21st

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Yes, the bike is back together after 'Engine Rebuild III' and we are confidently told the problem has been fixed at last. And there's news from the other members of our constantly expanding bike fleet.

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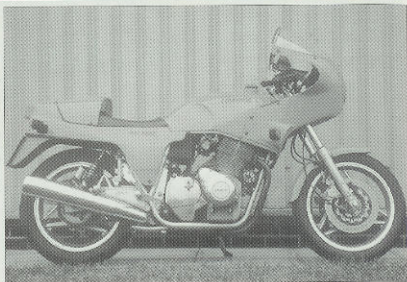
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It takes place on October 16th, but just what will we and the other stand holders be up to on the day? Read on...

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Is this the first 400/4 'rebuild project' ever completed by a bike magazine? Graham Curtis is the star kid and you can see the complete bike at our show in October.

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A succession of costly blow-ups have left our young Earlystocks racer Steve Wong down in the dumps. He nurses the RD400 to two race finishes at Mallory this month.

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Bike mechanic Adrian Roberts was staring at two little Honda twins in the workshop. Then he had an idea...

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LAVERDA 'TREBLE'

No, we're not spuriously referring to the three-cylinder SFC1000, because the big 'un is joined by a genuine works 500 racing twin and the very latest 650 from the recently revived Italian factory. A day of fascinating contrasts for Laverda fan Neil Webster.

LOGIC defies it, but for some reason I've always had a soft spot for Laverdas. No jokes about my 'soft spot' being a bog in the west of Ireland please.

It's not that I've got any great memories of them. I did pound down the M1 to the 1980 British Grand Prix on a big 'sit up and beg' 1200 tourer, and in my MCN days I did some speed testing at MIRA and rode the big triples along a few

country lanes.

Despite that, the word 'Montjuic', or a picture of a Jota, has long been enough to raise my enthusiasm level above gas mark one.

No wonder I jumped at the chance to ride one of the ex-factory Formula 500 racers that inspired the Montjuic, plus a big sporty SFC1000 triple and the factory's brand new 650 - the first British journalist to ride it.

FORMULA 500 RACER

A genuine TT prize winner

THE 500 is the private property of Laverda enthusiast Alan Preston, who runs specialist Italian parts suppliers Moto Frescaro GB from a base near Donington Park.

It started life as a factory Formula 500 racer and was imported to the UK in April 1979 for top Laverda racer Peter Davies to ride in that year's Formula Two TT. Davies took it to fifth place in the race and with fellow Laverda riders Roger Winterbourn and Mick Hunt captured the manufacturers' prize for the factory.

It was sold soon afterwards but never raced again, or road registered, and eventually fell into the hands of Alan's friend Mark White. In 1988 Mark asked Alan to store the bike while he moved house, but one thing followed another and Alan was finally given the option to buy it.

A Laverda fan since his school-days, he didn't need asking twice. The next problem was what to do with it.

Laverda importers Slater Brothers, who have supplied Alan with full documentation relating to his bike, had started producing 500cc 'Montjuic'

road machines following the factory's success in the Formula 1 two class of the 1978 Montjuic Park endurance race in Barcelona.

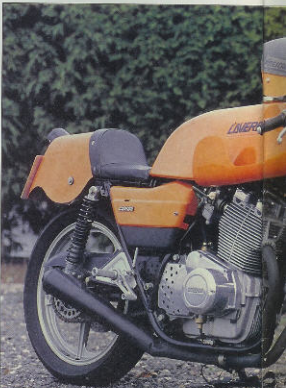
The factory shipped over the basic F500 machines and Slators modified them with factory supplied parts including cams and high compression pistons and changed the bodywork.

That provided Alan with a starting point. His bike would be a 'real' F500 road bike, based on the 'Montjuic' exercise.

A top half fairing replaced the full factory item and an SFC tank and racing seat replaced the original Alpina items. This was made easier as Alan's business is based on producing racing bodywork and parts for



Voglia rev counter dominates the F500's control panel.

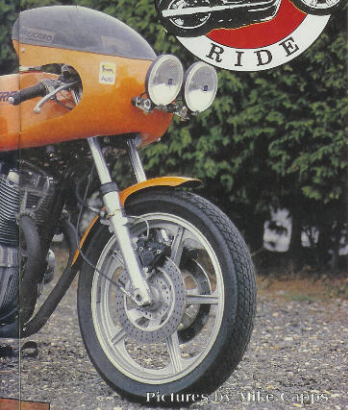


Laverda riders throughout the world.

The noisy racing exhaust system was put into store and replaced with a marginally quieter Montjuic set, but the engine has not been touched and apart from the cosmetics the bike is just as it was ridden in the Isle of Man.

"The bike has so much history that I didn't want to mess with it," said Alan. "All the parts I have replaced are carefully stored so if I did want to reproduce the TT machine I could easily do so."

Sit on the bike and the huge white faced Veglia tachometer demands your attention. The speedo is a much smaller item, almost an afterthought. The red line on the tach reads 8500 rpm, but after my brief ride on wet and greasy roads Alan assured me that the line really indicated the optimum gear change point rather than any rev limit. He reckons it should rev on to 11,000 "but I want to keep it together."



Pictures by Mike Capps

Bodywork mods are the main changes Alan Preston has made.

The small seat is rock hard and the low, low clip-ons are a stretch. Add the stiff throttle and high rear sets and you know immediately that this is a bike not to be messed with. Treat it roughly and it will turn round and snap your goolies off!

Surprisingly, it has an electric start (no kick). Get the handlebar mounted choke lever in position, hit the button and the sleepy rural village of Diseworth was shattered by an ear splitting bark from the stubby twin silencers. And these are the quiet ones! The clutch is incredibly light

and the conventional left side change one down, four up gear-box is almost imperceptible as it snicks from ratio to ratio.

Chugging out of the village and up to Donington for a few pits was like holding back an energetic Alsatian dog. The cam profiles mean it doesn't really start to get into its stride until around 8500 revs, but it was remarkably easy to handle with judicious slipping of the clutch and careful tip-toeing round slippery bends.

The bike is still wearing its original racing tyres and as it is



Corsa badge proclaims the Laverda's background.

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- ◊ 1971 Bredoni Laverda 1000: 1st built
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- ◊ 1980 Moto Guzzi Le Mans II: ex-customer South African import

For further information contact Alan Preston on 0332 811123
CALLERS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Laverda Formula 500 racer, SFC1000 & 650



clearly Alan's pride and joy and the winner of a Laverda Owners Club national concours, it would have been the end of the world if I'd dropped it!

Nevertheless, Alan swears it makes a good long distance road bike, as it should with its endurance race background. Fitted with a small tank bag it has accomplished trouble-free return trips to a Laverda Owners Club International Rally in Wales and to the club's fun day at Cadwell Park.

It seems the tank bag actually replicates the effect of the small tank pad used on the endurance racers and makes riding long distances less of a hassle as you have something to lean on. Even so, Alan admits it's not a bike for going to work on.

Alan's bike isn't for sale, but he does know of another original 1979 TT machine that is up for grabs. Anyone interested should contact him at Moto Prescaro on 0332 811123 and he'll pass on the message.

SFC 1000 TRIPLE

Beast of a road burner

JUST a few miles down the road, my next port of call on a wet and windy Wednesday was the aptly named 'Windy Corner', the dealership owned and run by Roger Winterburn, a member of that successful 1979 Laverda TT team.

Famous for his racing exploits, particularly aboard Jotas in the Seventies and early Eighties, Roger was Laverda UK's sales manager until the importing reins were taken over from Slaters Brothers by Three Cross Motorcycles in the winter of 1981-2.

He then set up by himself, first selling



Laverda parts and servicing machines and eventually building up today's large dealership in Barwell, Leicestershire, just a few miles from Malvern Park.

Roger now majors on Harley-Davidsons, BMWs and Triumphs, but he is still involved with the rebirth of the Italian marque and was able to offer me not only a smart SFC big triple, but a spanking new 650 twin.

AGE before beauty.

The SFC1000 was the peak of big triple Laverda development between 1983 and 1985.

Essentially the sports version of the RGS1000, its whacking great double overhead cam 981 cc motor features forged pistons, a 120 degree crank, a compression ratio of 10.5:1 and a quoted top speed of 240kph at 6250rpm. It is air cooled, but also carries an oil cooler.

What that means in real life is a huge boost of an A road burner that takes no prisoners.

It's long, lean and very firm. Although it is also tall (it has to be house that big triple) it is not as high in the saddle as the earlier bikes. The sparsely padded seat is sculpted into the lines and so manages to be reasonably low and the clip-on handlebars sit above

Long, lean Laverda SFC1000 demands a positive approach. It was the high point of the factory's mid-eighties development.

the headstock, so don't force the rider into a racing crouch.

The rear hump also supports the rider's bum from behind so that even my compact frame was in a reasonably comfortable semi-prone position. I wouldn't like to take a long motorway trip on it, but for a good morning's bend swinging it would be no problem.

The huge tach, speedo (kph only), temperature gauge and warning lights are cut into a large racing style console mounted on a sub frame that isolates it from some of the inevitable vibrations from a big triple.

Styling is period, with the lines of the long top half fairing running down the tank to the sidopannels and into the seat unit. To me they seem a bit smooth for such a hairy chested machine, a bit like a night club bouncer dressed up in the establishment's latest Armani uniform, but I'm sure that for some people it's sex on wheels.

The rest is pure Laverda. Big chrome silencers emit a characteristic loud boom when the start button is hit and the engine starts its odd off-beat mechanical throb cylin-



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der chattering. The vibrations make themselves felt through the solidly mounted footrests, the hard seat and the handlebars. It's not particularly inksane, just ever present.

The hydraulic clutch is deceptively light to use, but the resistance soon starts to strain the left hand if it's called upon too regularly, and the throttle demands a conscious effort to operate.

The five speed gearbox (left side lever) also demands respect. Try to rush it and you'll end up between gears, sailing into bends with no revs on the clock and no engine braking. It's not good trying to treat a bike like this as if it's a Japanese box bike. It DEMANDS respect. It DEMANDS a serious, studied approach.

For that reason it is more at home on long, loping high speed roads than back lane scratching. It's not a bike on which to dive into a corner and then try to shift down quickly while braking hard. It has to be set up. Gear chosen in advance and selected smoothly, brakes squeezed not hit, line mentally marked out and stuck to and power led in gradually.

This is one big bike. Get it out of line or out of shape and you'll be in trouble. It wouldn't suit everybody, but then it's not designed to.

Treated properly the result is satisfying. The Marzocchi front forks and rear shocks may have Margart Thatcher like firmness, but like the Iron Lady (no politics here) we're going down the middle in this office) it sticks to its course like spinach to your teeth.

The twin Brembo front 300mm discs are operated by piston callipers but are surprisingly effective considering the job they are asked to do. The only drawback is that they have to be used

firmly and that again means it's literally a pain on stop-go back lane runs. The single rear 300mm Brembo disc was not so good and had very little feel.

Our photo session eventually came to an end because both my hands were aching after excessive clutch and brake use due to repeated accelerating, braking, cornering, stopping and turning round. But then again that's not normal daily use. It's hard to imagine anyone choosing a big Laverda as a commuting option.

The SFC is an out-and-out thoroughbred and if you wanted to stretch its limits ever further, there was also a racing kit available. The kit offered different camshafts and valve springs, a three-into-one exhaust system, new inlet system, revised gear ratios, magnesium Marzocchi front forks and 36mm carburetors.

With those extras on board you'd better be serious about being a serious motorcyclist.

THE NEW '650'

Welcome back Laverda!

OUT of the ashes of the Laverda factory's financial ruin in July 1992 has emerged a new company, with new ideas and a new machine - the simply named '650'.

Development of the machine



The new Laverda 650 is light and flickable.



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Laverda Formula 500 racer, SFC1000 & 650

started before the factory's fall, and the new company 'International Imola Moto Laverda' (Imola standing for International Motor Laverda) wasted no time in putting it into production. It will be officially launched at the Cologne Motorcycle Show in October.

Roger Winterburn surprised us (and plenty of modern bike mags and the importers themselves) by offering us a ride on one of the first 650 demonstrators.

He only took delivery of the 650 the day before my arrival to test the SFC, so it only had 40 kilometres on the clock when I climbed aboard with instructions not to thrash it or crash it. It was hard to resist the temptation to do the first and thank goodness my luck held out on the second.

One look tells you this bike is Italian. It's simply gorgeous. The styling is similar to Cagiva's latest efforts and is seriously sexy. It looks and feels like a modern 250, but underneath the Ferrari red fairing lies an air-cooled 666cc parallel twin cylinder motor that isn't so far removed from the Montjuic unit of over ten years ago.

But it's been worked on. For a start it has fuel injection via a Weber-Marelli unit, integrated with a variable advance electronic ignition system setting fire to the resulting mixture. The frame is a modern alloy beam design and suspension is bang up to date with White Power upside down front forks and single White Power shock at the back.

Roger says he can also see a host of small detail changes such as an oil sight glass which racers like himself added to their own bikes years ago.

With two cylinders and air cooling the machine feels incredibly light and low. It's

New Laverda 650 is a stunner. Only time will tell if it's a seller, but confidence is high.



flickable, handles brilliantly and slips in a hedgehog's shadow thanks to four pot opposed-piston calipers working on twin Brembo 320mm drilled discs up front and single piston, 245mm drilled rear disc. (Compare that with the much bigger SFC1000.)

The ride, the response of all controls and the featherlight feel of the bike is the total antithesis of an old style Laverda, but there are still some reminders of days gone by.

Gogs in the six speed gearbox still need to be positively selected, with sloppy down-changes resulting in false neutrals, and the twin cylinder engine betrays its large capacity through a trace of vibration. The rusty

exhaust note from the twin Lafrancoi silencers is one of the good things retained from past glories however.

The factory quote a power output of 70hp and a top speed of 225kph, which won't keep it with Yamaha FZR or Honda CBRs, but as an individualist's sports machine it has a lot going for it.

With an on-the-road price tag of £6999, Roger reckons he could sell quite a few. I'd say he could be right. Welcome back Laverda!

Laverda Owners Club feature, page 28.

WINDY CORNER

LAVERDA SPECIALISTS

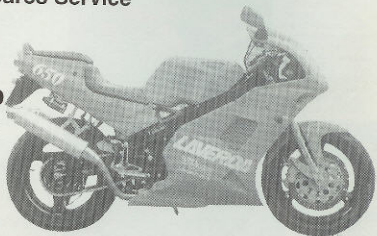


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LAVERDA

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LAVERDA
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Club profile

FOUNDED twenty years ago after enthusiast Hal Kendall placed an advertisement in the weekly bike press asking for fellow fans to contact him, the International Laverda Owners Club now has a thousand members.

That doesn't make it one of the biggest one make clubs, but for an exclusive marque such as Laverda it must be pretty good.

The big annual event is the Laverda Owners Club International Rally, held in the Peak District this year, but there is also an exhaustive international calendar of overseas dates.

The club's bi-monthly magazine 'La Vera Vista' currently lists events in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland and of course Italy.

Forty UK members made the pilgrimage to the 1994 Dutch Laverda Club rally.

The club also hosts an annual

track day, usually at Cadwell Park, which this year attracted over 60 machines, including ten exclusive SFG750 Laverdas.

Monthly pub meetings and camping weekends are also organised throughout the country.

Some of these are combined with other organisations, such as the Italian Motorcycle Owners Club or the Ducati Owners Club.

Alan Proston, who owns the ex-works Formula 500 racer tested earlier in the magazine, helps organise a typical monthly get together with local East Midlands Ducati Owners Club member Giuseppe Caruso.

Their joint meeting takes place at the Bull and Swan in Diseworth, near Donington Park,

on the fourth Friday of every month and 'La Vera Vista' lists numerous others that are held regularly.

Also listed on the ILOC curriculum vitae of membership benefits are factory visits, club regalia, technical advice and emergency contacts, plus the usual BMF and MAG affiliation benefits and access to the Carole Nash club members' insurance scheme.

For the historically minded, or members trying to trace the background to their own machines, the club has built up a comprehensive library of Laverda bits and pieces.

Run by archivist John Faulkner, the collection includes manuals, road tests, spares books, sales leaflets and brochures, press releases and factory photographs.

The club publishes a list of materials in the archive and copies are available to members for the cost of the copying and postage only.

John is also the DVLA approved club inspector for machine dating for age related registration number plates, a service particularly useful for imported machines.

The service is free to members, or £15 for non-members. Membership itself costs £16 per year, with joint membership



for couples (partners if you want to be politically correct) at £20. There is a one-off joining fee of £2. Members joining after July 1 each year receive a fifty per cent reduction in subscriptions for the first year.

LAVERDA International Owners Club
JOIN US AND ENJOY A WHOLE NEW EXPERIENCE

The International Laverda Owners Club (ILOC) was founded in 1974, and numbers now exceed 1000. Full membership is open to all Laverda owners - enthusiastic non-owners are welcome to join as Associates, while news and guidelines etc may join as Joint members.

Club objectives are to promote interest in Laverda motorcycles, organise meetings and social events, encourage members knowledge and enjoyment of Laverdas.

- Benefits of membership are:**
- Bi-monthly magazine 'La Vera Vista'
 - Continental race meetings and rallies
 - Club track events
 - Factory visits
 - Unique club regalia
 - Regional monthly meetings
 - Weekend events
 - Technical advice
 - Emergency contacts
 - BMF and MAG affiliation

Regional meetings are held at venues around the country. These provide an opportunity to meet club members and hear about future activities. Prospective members are always welcome to attend and find out more about the ILOC.

'La Vera Vista' is a professionally produced club magazine. It fills the essential role of keeping members informed. It is also intended to be an entertaining and interesting read. Details of forthcoming events, reports on recent activities, new meeting venues, members' news and comments are just a few examples of content.

Membership runs from January to December and is renewable each January. If you join after July 1st a 50% reduction is made. The joining fee provides two quality ILOC decals. Annual subscription is £16 (Full and Associate membership), £20 (Joint membership) (reducing to £8 and £10 respectively after July 1st, in all cases a £3 joining fee is payable).

For enquiries & membership details, please contact:
SECRETARY: ALAN CUDLIP, ORCHARD COTTAGE, ORCHARD TERRACE, ACOMB, HEXHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND NE46 4QB.
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: NICK CLEMENTS 21, WANSBURY WAY, SWANLEY, KENT, BA8 1DH



Contacts

Membership secretary: Nick Clements, 21 Wansbury Way, Swanley, Kent.
Secretary: Alan Cudlipp, Orchard Cottage, Orchard Terrace, Acomb, Hexham NE46 4QB.

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