

# ON THE LAV

The words Laverda Jota were enough to loosen the bowels of many mid Seventies superbikers

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PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN OVERTON



Spending the afternoon on the Lav could mean you're in a bit of a digestive dilemma. Something none too pleasant. But gut wrenching power takes on a different meaning when the Lav is a Laverda Jota muscle bike.

The Jota put the wind up many mid Seventies rosette riders and won fame for being the fastest production motorcycle

of its time. A top speed of 140mph was attainable with 90bhp on tap from the three cylinder 980cc engine. Combine that with a solid frame, tall seat height, heavy clutch, around 500lb weight and short adjustable clip-on handlebars and you have a real man's machine. Man as in Popeye arms, T-shirt in winter and medalion resting in hairy chest.

Seventies man has Britain to thank for

the Jota, a tuned version of the Breganze firm's double overhead cam 3C triple. Wootestershire Laverda importers Richard and Roger Slater exchanged 4-C camshafts for the cooling A/11 standard type and fitted 10-1 pistons. Then they ditched the air filter and silencers to let the bees breathe.

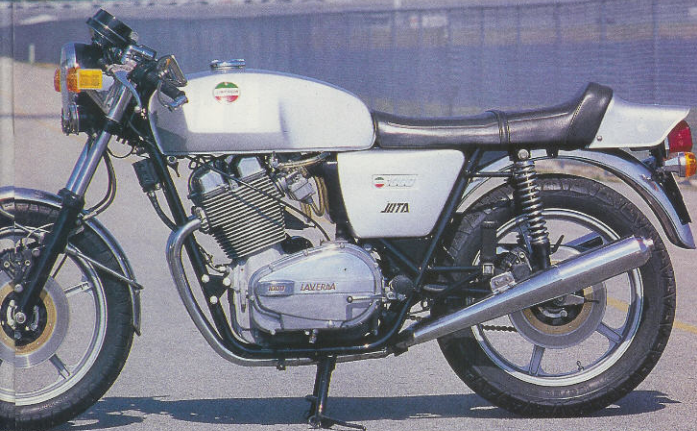
Roger Slater named their production racer the Jota, which is a Spanish dance in

Bob Bressler's 1977 Jota is a rare US model with left foot gear shift



Jota got silver frame, forward cantilevered shocks and big valves from 1979





three-four time. Three cylinder, four-stroke — geddit?

Although one of Laverda's 1969 prototype triples had a 120 degree crank, the 3C and Jota's crank throws are spaced at 180 degree intervals. The firm reverted to the smoother — and blander — 120 degree crank in 1982.

This Jota is a US model, detectable by its left foot gear shift and reflector indicators. Bob Bressler, a 48 year old computer consultant from Florida, owns this original 1977 example which still has standard plug caps, silencers, Voxhell horns and Ceriani shocks.

Bob paid \$4800 (\$3160) for the Jota in an amateurish restored state with 16,000 miles on the clock. It was painted orange — not available on the Jota until the classic orange bodywork, silver frame combination was offered in 1979. Unusually, the frame was repainted with the engine still in place.

Initially available only in Britain, Jotas are rare in the US. More common in the

States is the Jarama, a soft tused version of the 3CL featuring lower gearing, different carbs but still with left foot shift.

Because they are basically high performance versions of other models, Jotas are hard to spot. Laverda supplied modified triples but did not distinguish the Jota by the frame or engine number. Bressler is convinced his is genuine. "I looked at the cams and they're 4/C cams and I have 10:1 pistons, so it's a real Jota. Either the factory or the Slater brothers did it, I'm not sure which."

Bob Bressler has owned many Italian bikes, including a Ducati 900SS and modern Moto Guzzi twin. He rates the Laverda highly. Redline on the Nippon Denso Cocks is marked at 6500rpm, "but it pulls strong after that. It accelerates amazingly well. I'm very impressed... and I've always had Dukes. But it does take a bit of effort to ride quickly," he says.

An effort that's well worthwhile. I'd rather be wrestling with this law than restless on my law. **B**

Lifting the cam cover to check the shafts is stamped 4/C is a good test of Jota authenticity

