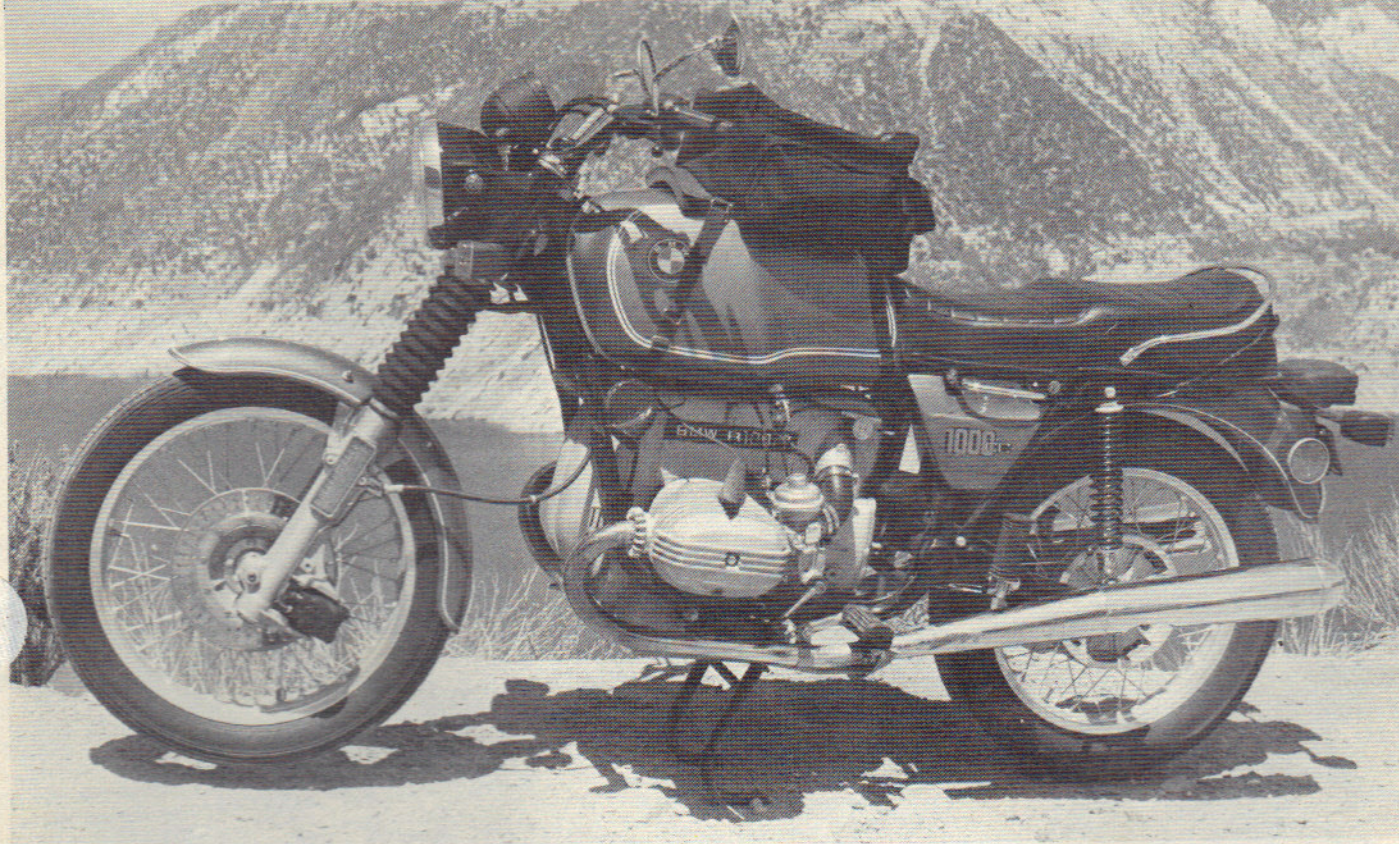




BMW R100/7

Fun, fun, fun on the Autobahn . . .

The R100/7, BMW's big seller. There's the S series for the cafe set, the incredible RS for the status-conscious. But the R100/7 is without doubt the workhorse of the Bavarian Motor Works. This is the model that is the favorite of the tourist as well as the working class. The slash 7 is as at home on the Superslab as it is in crowded city traffic.

We had the opportunity to spend a little time with the R100 recently and were quite surprised at what we found out about the old girl. After not having ridden a BMW in quite some time, we were almost astonished at the changes that had come about in the last couple of years. We honestly expected the R100 to be rather outdated. Sluggish and matronly, like the old nag that pulled the milk cart for years and years. We were wrong.

Although now displacing 980 torquing cc and weighing in at right around 474 pounds, the R100/7 is actually a lady at heart. A lady who's been around long enough to know the ways of the world and how to deal with them. The following is the account of our all too brief affair with this remarkable woman. Come with us now and discover, as we did, why the lady is a vamp . . .

STARTING

With the proper degree of choke dialed into the lever under the left petcock, the R100 shimmies briefly, then springs to throbbing, pulsing life. Before everything lights up, though, one is startled somewhat by the violence of the shudder. The two enormous pistons pumping sideways and the rotational mass of the giant crank combine to create

quite an upheaval for a second or two.

It's rather like sitting on the back of a big horse when it decides to shake the saddle off.

As soon as everything is working, the engine settles down to a smooth idle with only a hint of big twin vibration. Once under way, a slight vibration is felt through the bars. Things would be smoother with a different set of grips installed. The stock Maguras are too hard, too rough and too small. We wouldn't be surprised if the folks at BMW included them for buffing inner tubes in roadside flat repair.

On chilly mornings, the R100/7 is a little fussy to start, requiring full choke for a moment before it will idle. The owner's manual tells you that you can drive away on a cold engine by putting the choke lever in the middle slot. It works.

LOVE STORY

BY CHET CARMAN

I was gently nudged out of my reverie by the sight of a big car cruising alongside me in the right-hand lane. It was a Cadillac, a new one at that. When it became obvious that the Caddy was deliberately pacing me to stay alongside, I casually looked over, wondering if I was about to get offed by some drunk Texan with a dislike for motorcycles.

It was a girl.

Pretty, she was, and not without just a little of the rich-bitch snootiness that so tantalizes shmucks like me. She was smiling coyly and looking down at the big bike.

As I watched her intently, she slowly raised her gaze to meet my dark face shield. Her smile broadened into a grin as she began to slowly mouth words behind her air-conditioned electric window. I could barely read her lips . . .

"Allo voo by . . ."

I stared. She repeated, tossing her head back with a giggle,

"I . . . love . . . your . . . bike . . ."

I momentarily lost consciousness, drifting between lanes of traffic, narrowly avoiding bumpers and door handles as I floated along on my metallic blue cloud. She waved bye-bye as the Cadillac slid down the next exit ramp.

Wow.

Had she been able to see through my black flip shield, she would have found the glazed expression of Tom Sawyer bliss that comes with love's first kiss.

"I . . . love . . . your . . . bike . . ."

So do I.

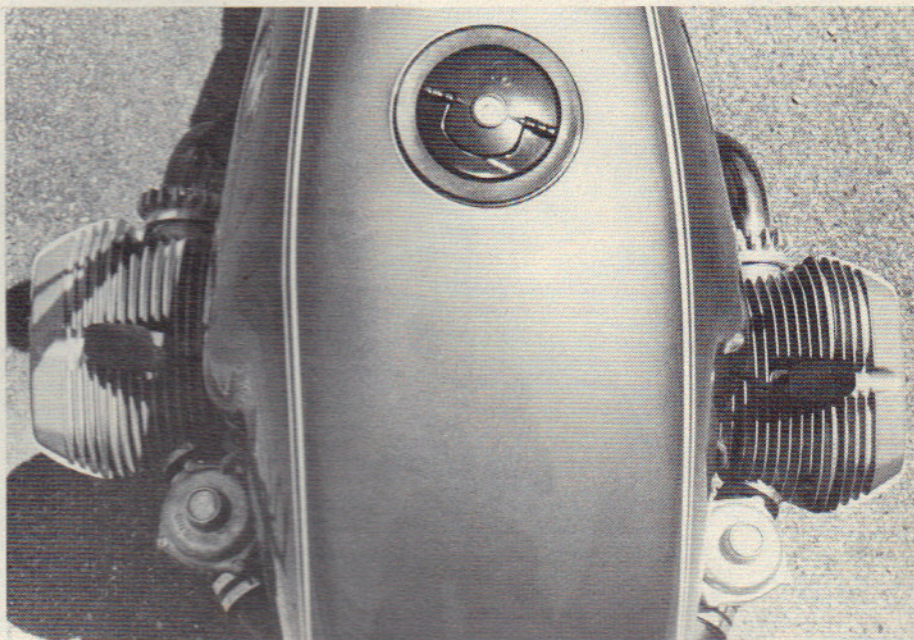
A relatively firm jab is required to engage first gear without some clatter. He who hesitates may well find himself embarrassed.

GOING

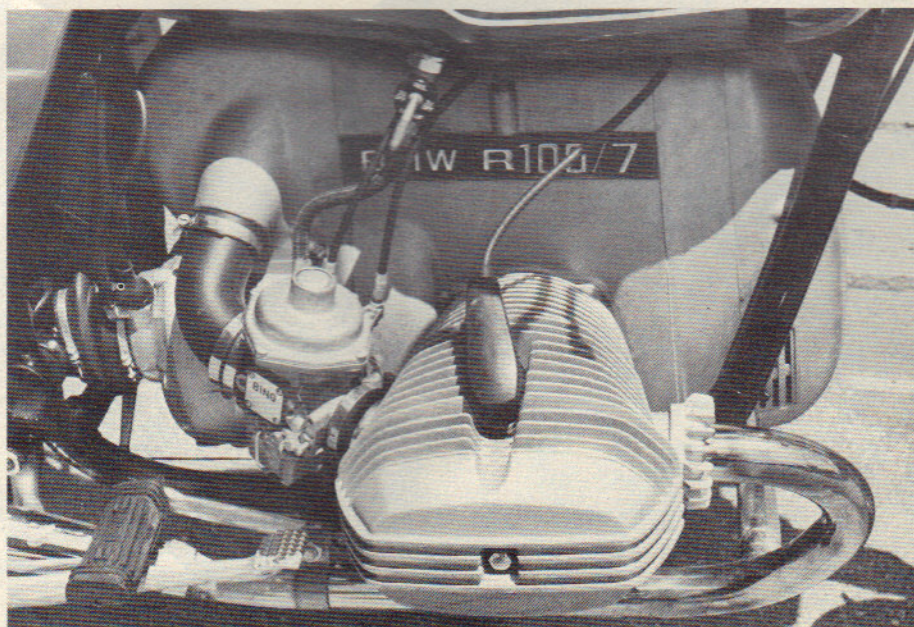
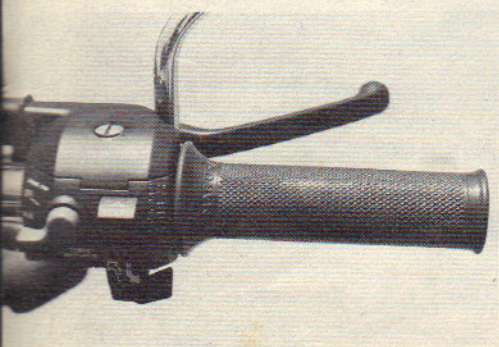
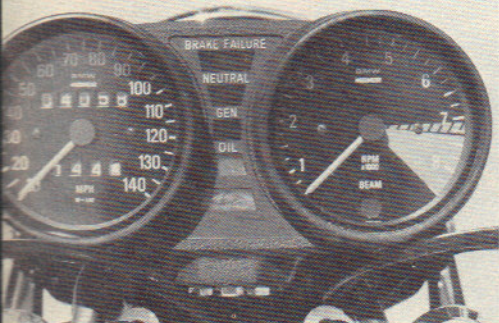
The sound, ah, the sound. There's nothing like a big twin for the sweetest music this side of heaven. The R100/7 has our vote for Song Of The Year. A purr, a rumble, a growl when charging up a freeway ramp. Quiet, but distinctive. Like many qualities the BMW possesses, the sound is understated. Rich and elegant.

A few miles up the freeway, maybe ten miles at the BMW's 60-70 mph touring pace, and a relationship begins to develop be-

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"... those two bucket-sized cylinders down there remind you that the BMW is unique."



BMW R100/7

(Continued from page 36)

tween bike and rider. An interaction. *The Dance*.

The sight of the two bucket-sized cylinders riding down there in the wind, under the tall and narrow 6.3-gallon tank, serves to remind

one that the BMW is unique. You find yourself frequently glancing down and smiling. You talk to the bike like you have with no other. Conversation is in muted tones.

Under intense acceleration, the R100 lifts its tail, a result of the drive shaft forcing the rear wheel down, a trait common to all

shafties. No chain noise, no snap. A smooth and quiet power delivery. Nice.

TURNING

Back to the material world. Aside from being possibly the world's ace pick-up bike, to be ranked with the Turbo-Carrera, the XKE and the

HOW TO OWN A BMW

— Look as much as possible like David Niven. (At least the moustache.)

— Insist on watching if a mechanic has to work on the bike.

— Buy a bottle of BMW touch-up paint with the new bike.

— Wear a white dust coat with the BMW logo over the pocket when performing even minor maintenance on the machine.

— Learn how to intimidate parts personnel.

— Drink only Heineken's or Beck's out of a ceramic stein.

— Be on a first-name basis with someone of authority at Butler and Smith.

— Never, *never* street race. You may, on occasion, put the pass on an unbeliever by employing the maneuver Farina used on

Nuvolari at Monte Carlo in 1935, but only if you can do it *well*.

— Constantly discuss the old Earles-type front forks in the most intimate of terms.

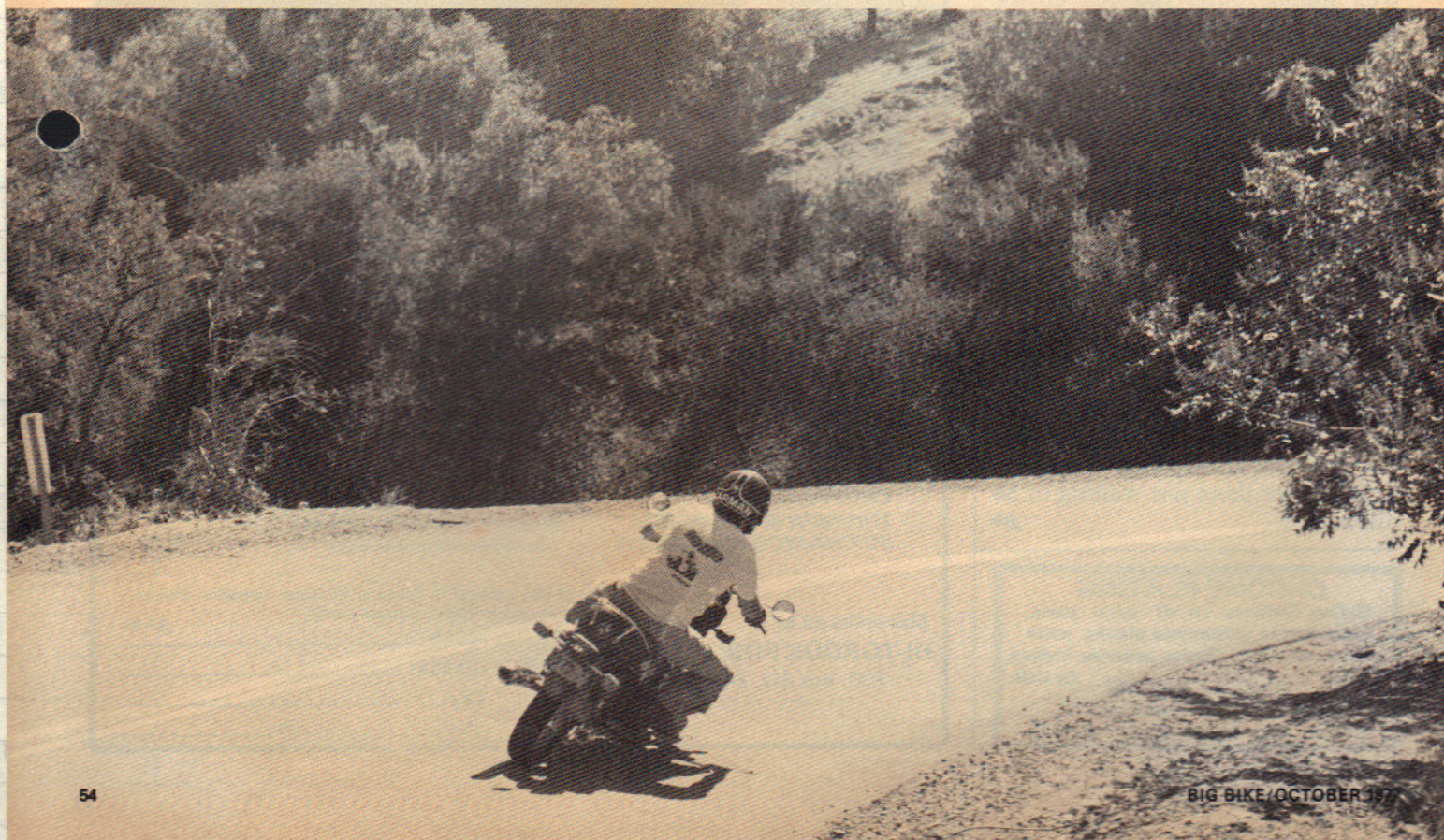
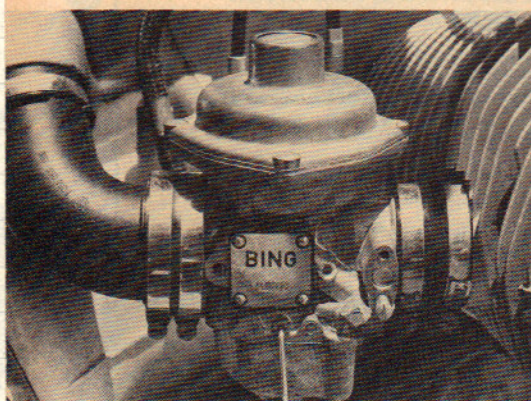
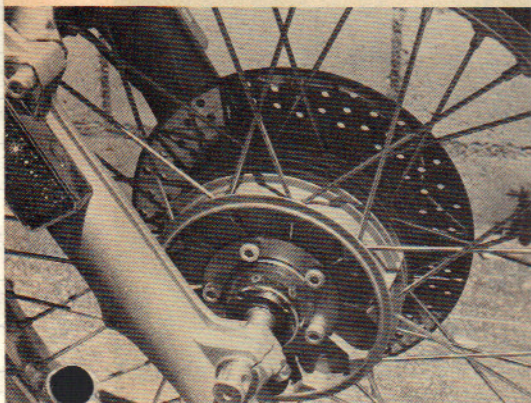
— Never blip the throttle at stoplights.

— Redlining the engine is prohibited in any case.

— Annoy your dealer with complaints of obscure sounds or sensations that only you perceive.

— Regale captive parts counter people with funny stories about your old RAF squadron leader. (Ethiopian military police are also acceptable.)

— Be smug — remember, you have demonstrated the fact that you were obviously born to a higher station in life by owning the pride of the Bavarian Motor Works.



Despite the massive masculinity which a new BMW inflicts upon the senses of passersby, there is something almost ladylike in the manner in which it attacks a curve. A feminine determination to win through manipulation, to bend the curve to its will.

We never found the limits of traction during our many outings on the bike. The sidestand, rear brake pedal and the ends of both pegs have been shaved considerably since we picked up the bike, and never once did the R100 do anything remotely alarming in a corner.

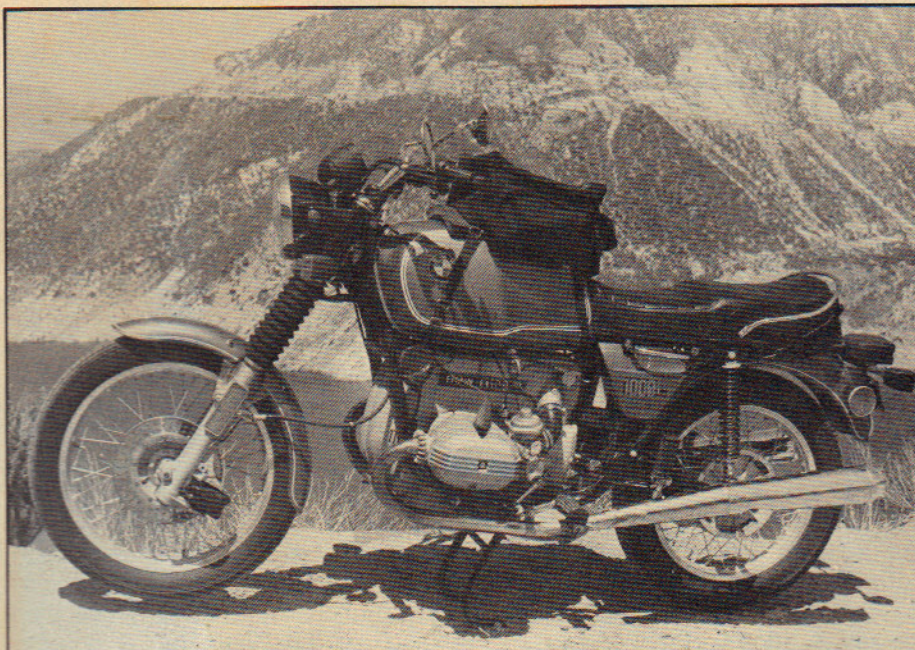
STOPPING

Brakes on the BMW are, frankly, the best. Not bad, just not quite there. We never got into trouble because of them, but after riding some of the Japanese superbikes, the progressive feel of the R100 units gave us a little concern. Could be just those on our test unit.

The traditional BMW curtsy under heavy braking, due to more progressive damping in the long travel forks, has been replaced this year by a distinguished bow from the waist, much better.

The Magura dogleg-style black levers neatly fit the fingers of even small hands and provide quite an advantage in leverage. Clutch action is as smooth as silk. In fact, the feel and function of all the controls could only be described as *elegant*. BMW lights, instruments and controls are approaching state-of-the-art. The horn sounds like it came from a Rolls-Royce.

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BMW R100/7
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Engine Type	Horizontally opposed OHV four-stroke twin
Displacement	980cc
Bore & Stroke	94mm x 70.6mm
Claimed BHP Horsepower at RPM	60 at 7000
Claimed Torque at RPM ft./lbs.	53 ft./lbs. at 6500 rpm
Compression Ratio	9.1:1
Carburetion	Two inclined 32mm Bing
Electrical System	Alternator, dual coil, points
Starting System	Electric only
Air Filter	Dry filter element
Lubrication Method	Wet sump
Recommended Fuel	Premium

Top Speed	117 mph
Gas Mileage	43 mpg
Touring Range	260 miles
Braking at 60 mph:	
Both Front and Rear	130 feet

Frame	Double downtube, dual cradle
Forks	Oil, spring
Rear Suspension	Adjustable shock
Front Tire	Metzeler 3.25 H 19
Rear Tire	Metzeler 4.00 H 19
Brakes:	
Front	Hydraulic single disc, floating caliper
Rear	Drum
Curb Weight	474 pounds

Fuel Capacity	6.3 gallons (24 liters)
Engine Oil Capacity	2.4 U.S. quarts (2.25 liters)
Gearbox Oil	0.85 U.S. quarts (0.8 liters)
Fork Oil Capacity	0.3 quarts (.28 liters) per leg

Transmission	Five-speed constant mesh
Final Drive Ratio	1:30
Clutch	Single dry plate
Final Drive	Enclosed cardan drive shaft

the bike, since the blown twin already had a great deal more speed than the unsupercharged singles. During the 1936 season the BMW had been plagued with torque reaction from the drive shaft design. Twisting up the wick in a corner provided some disastrous results when heeled over on a bumpy road, so this problem had to be solved.

In the spring of 1937 the new contender rolled out of the shop, and what a magnificent grand prix racer it was! A plunger type of rear suspension replaced the old rigid frame, and a pair of full-width alloy hubs with fins housed large brakes to match the speed.

The DOHC engine, which used bevel gears and tower shafts to drive the cams, had been pepped up to 68 hp at 8000 revs. The blower was a vane-type Zoller, and the fuel was the 50-50 petrol-benzol that was used from 1926 through 1939 under the FIM formula. By then the top speed was up to 140 mph, compared to the 125 mph maximums of the Norton and Velocette singles.

A British ace named Jock West joined the team that year, and he started off the season with a sixth place in the Senior TT. The powerful twin was at a distinct disadvantage on the Isle of Man's many corners, however, so the factory was still confident of better placings in the grand prix events.

The next race was the Dutch GP, where Karl Gall romped home the winner after Jimmy Guthrie's Norton blew up. Guthrie then won the Swiss and Belgian classics, but the popular Scot then lost his life in the German GP when leading late in the race. Gall won that one, and he also finished second in the Swedish GP to teammate Ley, and took a fourth in the Italian GP. Jock West finished off the season with a win in the fast Ulster GP, which gave Gall the unofficial European Championship. Norton, however, was still the top dog in the manufacturer's championship.

The factory made an even more determined effort for the 1938 season. The British singles were still

the models to beat, but there were also other supercharged multis being built that were destined to become even faster than the BMW. In the 1937 Italian GP, for instance, Gall was badly beaten at 105.65 mph by a new challenger from Italy — the blown and water-cooled Gilera-Rondine four that screamed to 10,000 revs and shoved out a phenomenal 90 hp for a speed of nearly 150 mph. A greater effort would have to be made.

The 1938 racers were changed very little from 1937, but the extensive use of alloys had reduced the weight to only 302 pounds — 30 pounds below the unsupercharged British singles. The singles still dominated the TT, however, with Jock West faring no better than fifth. That was the year when Harold Daniell (Norton) and Stanley Woods (Velocette) got into their fantastic battle that resulted in Daniell's last-lap record of 91.0 mph that was destined to stand for 12 long years.

Newcomer Georg Meier really hit his form that year with smashing wins in the German, Dutch, Belgian and Italian classics, which

easily brought him the first official European Championship. Jock West also won the Ulster, which gave BMW a clear-cut edge over Norton in the manufacturer's title chase.

The only thing left to win was the 1939 Senior TT — the most prestigious race in the world. The team went over early to get in many days of practice over the twisty 37¼-mile course. On race day the twins scored a stunning 1-2 victory with Meier and West scorching down the straights at colossal speeds. Meier averaged a record 89.38 mph, which to this day is BMW's only victory in the Senior TT.

On the continent, the BMWs had a new challenger in the dashing Dorino Serafini on his howling Gilera-Rondine four. Meier was probably the better rider of the two, but Serafini had the speed. Georg won the Belgian and Dutch events, but Dorino got the title with wins in the German, Swedish and Ulster classics plus a second in the Belgian event. The British singles, plus such supercharged beasts as the

(Continued on page 58)



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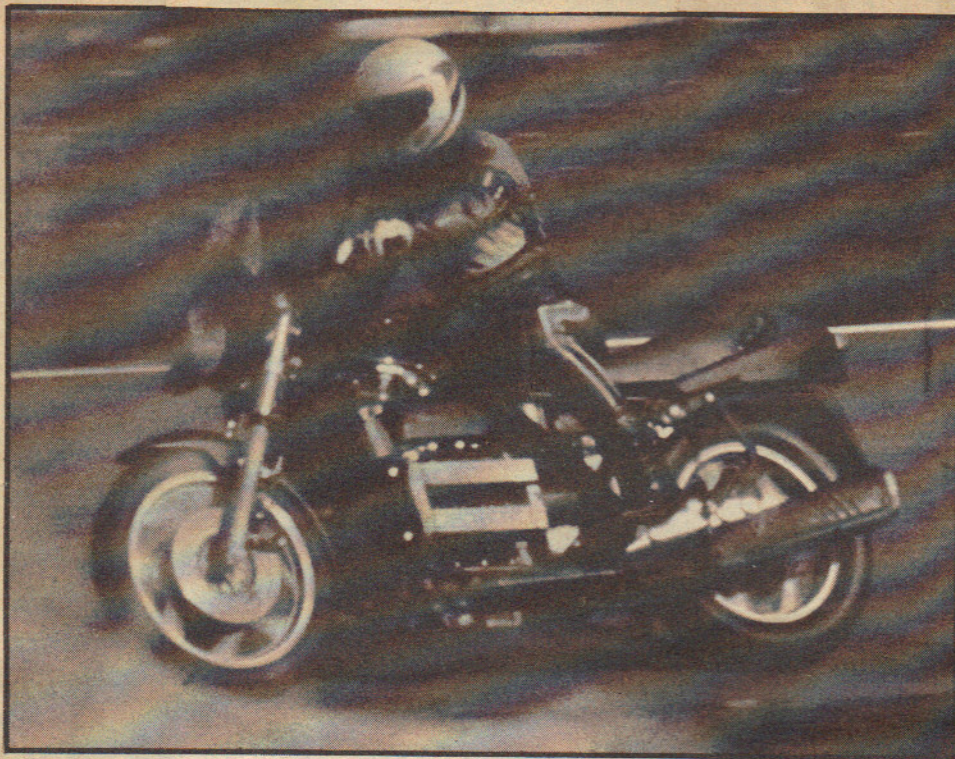
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Click! Flat - four caught in action

BMW'S BIG new 1,000 cc four - code-named K589 - has been snapped, above, by an Italian spy photographer while undergoing secret tests at the Mugello race track.

The new bike - an in-line four with all pots at 90 degrees to the vertical - has shaft-drive and was circulating the track between 2 minutes 40 and 2m 50 seconds.

A launch date has been fixed for September or October next year and production is scheduled to start in the spring at BMW's new factory in Berlin.

The bike produces 90 bhp at 8,000 rpm and, despite the bulky motor all up weight is reported to be a little more than 500 lb dry.

Engine is electronically fuel-injected and the shaft unit is in cast aluminium and works much like the present R80GS and R80ST machines with a single-sided swing arm/monoshock unit.

Three versions are to be made: A standard, an RS sportster and a full touring RT model.

Surprisingly, because of the sophisticated and automatic production facility in Berlin, price of the new bikes should be little more than the current R100RS - £3,879.

All 1,000 cc machines will be phased out with the introduction of the new fours, but the 800 cc twins will continue.

BMW STORY

(Continued from page 57)

NSU, FN, Guzzi, AJS, DKW and Benelli, weren't even in the hunt that year.

After the war the FIM banned both superchargers and Germany from racing, but the blown twins were still used in homeland races. An indication of their speed was the 1950 Rheyt Circuit race, where Meier won at a fantastic 129.87 mph and with a record lap of 134.21 mph. The compressor jobs really ran!

In 1951 Germany was readmitted to the FIM, so BMW got down to the task of designing an unsupercharged racer. The result was the 1953 Rennsport, a 500cc twin with a swinging-arm suspension both front and rear and a top speed of 124 mph. BMW developed this model over the following few years in the hands of Walter Zeller, but by 1958 it was obvious that the opposed twin layout was just not competitive against the four-cylinder models from Italy. The factory thus dropped out of the racing game and produced no more Rennsports.

The Rennsport was, however, incredibly successful as a sidecar model, due mainly to its low center of gravity and reliability at speed. In 1954 Willi Noll beat the great Eric Oliver (Norton single), and from then until 1975, BMW won every World Championship except two: the 1968 and 1971 titles that were taken by Helmut Fath and Horst Owesle with Fath's home-built URS four. That was 14 titles in a row and 19 out of 21... a record without equal in the history of international motorcycle sport.

In recent years the Munich factory has not seemed interested in producing any works racers or even replica models. There is some interest in production model racing, with some special parts and even whole bikes being produced for selected riders. The colorful and classic grand prix days are just history now, as the Bavarian company concentrates on producing modern motorcycles for an era of super bikes. Craftsmanship is their motto, and their customers are those who appreciate quality in an age of mass-produced consumer appliances. For the folks in Munich, there is no other way.

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