

Bush Chatter

January/February 2015

Digging for Guzzi gold...



Established in 1921 in Mandello del Lario, Italy, Moto Guzzi has played a significant role in Italy's motorcycling history. The company has been prominent in motorcycle racing worldwide, and industry innovations including the first motorcycle centre-stand, use of a wind tunnel, and eight-cylinder engine. Similar to other storied motorcycle manufacturers that have survived for

decades, Moto Guzzi has experienced a series of business cycles and a series of ownership arrangements—some complex, some brief, some that have endured. One of its most popular bikes was dubbed the Eldorado, ABOVE and LEFT. For more see Page 2.



PO Box 2071 Mildura 3500

Digging deep for Guzzi gold...

Perhaps more than any of Moto Guzzi's full-fendered classics, it's the Eldorado that exhibits the greatest measure of grace and presence.

Due to the success earned by preceding models the Eldorado (like the earlier Ambassador, its moniker was coined by the Berliners) gained a large and faithful following, thanks in large part to the progressive engineering lavished upon it by Moto Guzzi's engineers.

The fastest, smoothest and best handling of the series, many Eldorados were adorned with period touring accessories, but unlike its predecessors, the Eldorado was better equipped to handle the additional stress and weight.

Inherited by a new ownership group headed by Alejandro De Tomaso, the Eldorado was unfortunately seen as a product of the old regime, and moves were implemented to cease its production and replace it in Moto Guzzi's line with models based on Tonti's V7 Sport frame.



The final incarnation came in 1974, replete with disc braking.

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The Eldorado makes a very good touring mount. This is a 1974 ex-LAPD bike, ABOVE and BELOW, Guzzi's new 2015 Eldorado. It has more than a few of expectations riding on its spoked wheels.



Wanted To Sell

- NORTON Model 7 Dominator crankshaft and conrods. Fully reconditioned. Complete Norton Dominator gearbox minus clutch. Serial # GB8 2418 Will listen to realistic offers. Call Adam on 5023 0977.
- LEATHER JACKET. Brando style. Large. \$80. Garry 0429 837 633.
- HONDA BENLY 125cc 4stroke twin. 1962. Restored some time ago but never used. Great little club bike for the shorter runs. Will supply new battery. \$3000 Call Ron on 0427 236 256.
- HONDA CB100 1970. Complete and running. Price to be negotiated. Bill Cox on 5023 0653.

Wanted To Buy

- SUNBEAM S7 1950 gearbox to tailshaft coupling or bushes. Also gear indicator bezel that goes between gearbox and gear lever. Please contact Paul Dunn 0408 999 120.
- CB450 HONDA Twin Leading shoe front drum and backing plate and linkage. Complete. 0407 364 692 or email dougo294@hotmail.com.

Coming Events

Regular Club Runs

- **Monthly Meetings** as per schedule leave from Hudaks on 15th Street opposite Centro. 10am. The run finishes at the new Mildura Scout Hall in 12th Street, Mildura.
- **2nd Sunday after monthly meeting.** Mid-month ride leaves from Hudaks on 15th Street opposite Centro. 10am. Turn up with a full tank.

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But, history shows this was decided prematurely. Robbing the concern of six years of growing momentum, this action depressed buyers and resulted in a sales lull from which Moto Guzzi has never fully recovered.

Appearing outwardly unchanged from the Ambassador, the Eldorado nonetheless featured a number of significant upgrades. Combined with the 83 mm bore used to boost the Ambassador's output, Guzzi's engineers stroked the Eldorado's all alloy, 90-degree twin to 78mm, bumping

displacement to 844 cc.

Meanwhile, new pistons raised the compression ratio to 9.2:1, giving the Eldorado



a healthy 64.5 (crankshaft) horsepower at 6500 rpm.

The crankcases now featured the internal and external webbing introduced on the V7

Sport, and grafted the sport bike's 5-speed transmission on as well; a move that greatly increased the engine's flexibility.

The Euro-spec 850 GT gained the Sport's 4-Leading Shoe front stopper, while the Eldorado carried on with the same 2 LS front and rod-operated rear stopper fitted to the Ambassador.

For 1974, a single 300 mm Brembo front disc and two-piston caliper was added, which also adorned a new version called the California; essentially a police-issue Eldorado with chrome-plated fenders and a thick buddy seat.

Photograph: Another pretty late model Eldorado.

18 things you might not know about motorcycles...

By Tim Watson

1. The name Hayabusa, as used by Suzuki, is actually a Peregrine falcon as well as a World War 2 Japanese Kamikaze fighter plane – the Nakajima Ki-43 known more widely as the Zero.

2. Did you know that modern sports bike tires do not contain any actual rubber? The tread of a tire is composed of synthetic rubber, which has been compounded to give a compromise between durability and traction.

3. The longest distance riding a motorcycle in 24 hours is 2,019.4 miles and was set by American L. Russell "Rusty" Vaughn at the Continental Tire Test Track, Uvalde, Texas, USA, on 10 August 2011. Vaughn used his own 2010 Harley-Davidson FLHTK Electra-Glide Limited for the attempt and completed 238 laps of the test track and earned himself a place in the Guinness Book of World Records.

4. I didn't realize in the world of cinema Steve McQueen's infamous 65ft motorcycle jump in the film The Great Escape was actually done by American Triumph dealer Bud Ekins who did it in just one take.

Nor was I aware that in the 1970s TV cop series CHiPS, actors Larry Wilcox and Erik Estrada rode Kawasaki Z1000s with BMW fairings and that prior to the show Estrada underwent an intensive eight-week course, to learn how to ride. In 2007 it was revealed that Estrada didn't actually have a motorcycle license during the time CHiPs was in production, and he only qualified after three attempts, while preparing for an appearance with a motorcycle on a later reality television show.

5. I tried to find out what happened to the motorcycles used in the 1970s cult film Easy Rider and opinions on websites range from both bikes being destroyed during filming to actor and Grizzly Adams TV star Dan Hegarty apparently owning one. But there appears to be more Easy Rider motorcycles out there for sale than were ever actually made for the film. So I got no further with this.

6. Nobody it seems knows either what exactly happened to Marlon Brando's Triumph 650 Thunderbird motorcycle from the film 'The Wild One'. Some people claimed that it was Brando's own motorcycle that he agreed to ride on the set. Thereafter the trail goes cold. Surprisingly Johnson Motors, which imported Triumph to the USA, was at the time very unhappy about the Triumph logos being seen on Brando's

bike and asked unsuccessfully for them to be taken off the gas tank when filming started.

7. The first company that advertised its motorcycle's top speed of over 100mph was Brough Superior that made the claim for its SS100 in 1924. Considered even today to be innovative and beautifully designed machines, Brough motorcycles were the first to have prop stands, twin headlights, crash bars, interconnected silencers and 1000cc v-twin engines. Every SS100 was road tested (yes on public roads) to check that it could reach 100mph. If it didn't it was returned to the factory for further work. Engineering genius and owner of Brough Superior, George Brough, also wrote all of his company's advertising copy describing his motorcycles as "atmosphere disturbers".

8. Some of today's motorcycle companies are more diverse than you would ever believe. Many started from humble beginnings such as Ducati which was a family-owned firm that opened in Bologna, Italy, in 1935 making parts for radios before building motorized bicycles fitted with a 48cc SIATA engine. By 1950, more than 200,000 of these Ducati 'Cucciolos' (Italian for puppy) had been sold and two years later the company started making its own motorcycles and engines.

9. Aside from making bikes today Kawasaki also manufactures personal watercraft, ships, electronics, construction equipment tractors, trains, helicopters, jet engines, missiles and space rockets.

10. While rival Yamaha began life in 1887 as a piano manufacturer but today is a multi-national conglomerate which still produces musical instruments, but also boats, car engines, swimming pools, industrial robots, wheelchairs, RVs, electronics, and golf carts amongst other things and motorcycles.

11. Suzuki began life at the turn of the 20th Century making weaving looms for Japan's then burgeoning silk industry. However, company founder Michio Suzuki wanted to diversify his company and began an engineering firm that started making small cars and its own engines during the 1930's. The first Suzuki motorcycle appeared in 1952 and was really a motorized bicycle called a Power Free. It was fitted with a two-stroke 36cc engine and was unique at the time as it featured a double-sprocket gear system that allowed the rider to either pedal with engine assistance, pedal without the engine or simply disconnect the pedals and use the engine. Today, aside from the

production of motorcycles, Suzuki makes cars, marine engines, wheelchairs and is Japan's second largest manufacturer of small cars and trucks.

12. In 1946 Honda began selling pushbikes fitted with two-stroke 50cc generator engines originally designed for use with army field telephones. And 46 years later on it launched arguably the most technically complex production motorcycle ever made with the 1992 Honda NR750. The NR boasted oval pistons with two con rods and eight valves per cylinder. Designed initially as a race bike, Honda made 300 road-going versions of the NR available to the public and at the time it was considered one of the most expensive motorcycles you could buy.

13. There is so much technical information about motorcycles out there that it's hard to choose one interesting fact over another. But here are a few points that leapt out at me.

14. The gearshift lever on a motorcycle was invented by Harold Willis, of Velocette Motorcycles, in 1927 prior to that motorcyclists relied on a system of a foot clutch and hand shifter.

15. In 10,000 miles the average four-cylinder motorcycle engine will have completed 100,000,000 revolutions and it's estimated that a con-rod of a modern sports bike engine at full revs withstands 10 tons of compression and tensile forces 500 times a second.

16. BMW was the first manufacturer to patent and use telescopic forks on its R12 in 1932, yet ironically does not use the system on its big bikes today.

17. And although BMW claims it has been making Boxer twin engines for its bikes since 1923, production actually stopped for a few months in 1986 when the company thought all of its bikes in the future should have triples and four-cylinder engines. Customer demand persuaded BMW to continue with the Boxer and the production line was re-started again.

18. Recognized around the world as a leader in crash helmets manufacture for both on the race track and road, ARAI was actually a hat making company founded in Japan in 1926 making headgear for the construction industry. Company founder Hirotake Arai was once a motorcycle stunt rider and the company is still privately owned today and run by the third generation of the Arai family.