



was also keen to pursue a British connection for the production 750. He stated: "We are mainly interested in producing engines. We are opening a new factory later in the year and if the rest of the machine is British we don't mind." While the British connection didn't eventuate, the London sojourn led to many British components appearing on the production 750, notably Lockheed brakes, Amal carburettors, and Smiths instruments. The production frame also included some Seeley features, and it was rumoured that the British engineering consulting company Ricardo was involved in engine development in some way. The use of many British components wasn't accidental. Both Taglioni and Spairani were Anglophiles, and, as mentioned earlier, Taglioni was influenced more by Norton's Joe Craig than by contemporary Italian engineers.

Shortly after the Olympia Show, another 750 prototype appeared with the earlier tank and side covers, but with 32mm Amal carburettors and air cleaners. The exhaust header pipes were straight and the Silentium mufflers were

supported by a strut to the rear shock absorbers. All the subsequent prototypes featured Amal carburettors, and early in 1971 Ducati began to release more details about the new 750, claiming the power was 57.7 horsepower at 8000rpm at the rear wheel. It quoted the valve timing at inlet opening 62° before top dead centre, closing 84° after bottom dead centre, and the exhaust opening 80° before bottom dead centre, closing 58° after top dead centre. The weight was 377lb and factory test riders had attained 130mph on test bikes. Production versions were expected to run a standing quarter mile in 12.8 seconds and top out at 120mph. Already there was talk of a 900cc version (86x78mm) for the United States, the testing of four-valve desmodromic cylinder heads, and the replacement of the battery and coil ignition with an electronic type. None of these eventuated, but provision was made in the left crankcase for the mounting of an electronic ignition stator. Electric start was also to be optional, with the crankcases designed to accept a motor between the cylinders.

Another early 1971 prototype. Still with the smaller front drum brake but now with a Silentium muffler. (Ducati Motor)



tank and seat. There was also now a specific owners' manual in English (mod. 783/E). Identical to the Italian version but for an orange cover, this was published in March 1972. 10,000 were printed. The model was described as '750 GT' and an Italian pre-production example was shown. This manual was to be the only version provided for all the 750s, and much of the data was incorrect for the Sport, Super Sport, and 1974 750 GT.

This production series included the standardized production engine crankcases (from engine number 750405), incorporating four 10mm retaining bolts. Most also had a matching set of numbers stamped between the cylinders, indicating they had been machined as a matched pair for assembly. Instead of the central recesses in the sand-cast crankcases, a deep well was cast in the right crankcase, filled with epoxy resin at the factory to prevent oil leaks on those examples with porous crankcases. Many of the production series of crankcases exhibited signs of porosity. The standardized crankcases also used a longer oil gauze strainer and included a synthetic rubber tapered tube to locate it, accessed on the right by an AGIP plug. This rubber was secured by a small plug underneath the crankcase. By now all engines came with the clutch cover with an inspection plate. Also during this period, the mechanical tachometer drive from the front cylinder disappeared on European models as the Veglia Borletti electronic tachometer was introduced.

Around the implementation of the second production stage the metalflake fuel and side covers were discontinued, replaced by red or black fibreglass units with straight black or white tank decals. As was typical throughout the 750 production run, earlier components were often fitted if there was still a sufficient parts supply. Thus it was common to see a combination of the earlier metalflake tank with the revised seat. Until engine number 750500 the CEV tail-light assembly (model 9339.2) was a large black-painted metal type, with a round CEV 9313 tail-light lens. From engine number 750501, the European specification tail-light was the smaller, black-painted metal CEV model 9262, that would continue through until 1974.

While the control layout was unchanged, with the second production series came a shift to Veglia Borletti instruments for European specification versions (after engine number 750500). The speedometer measured km/h and the tachometer was electronic (redlined at 7500rpm). All 750 Veglia instruments had a metal needle, painted white with a red tip. With the Veglia Borletti speedometer there was a new speedometer drive on the front



axle. The positioning of the instruments in the panel also changed, with the speedometer on the right and tachometer on the left. As a result, the speedometer cable was shorter (850mm versus 950mm) and the trip reset shaft was on the right. The lower component of the dashboard also changed, with the left-side oblong hole now positioned vertically. The right hole remained horizontal. The hole was probably changed because the cables for the instrument light bulbs protruded too far out, and the instruments wouldn't fit flush with the panel. This was particularly noticeable with Smiths instruments as the Veglia speedometer had a deeper instrument light bulb

The 1972 owners' handbook for the 750 GT was the only 750 handbook printed.

While the engine workshop manual was primarily just pictures, it also contained much useful information.

The early fold-out brochure featuring the pre-production 750 is now highly prized.



a frame with an east/west battery tray, and the regulator position was changed as there was a different air filter for the rear carburettor. The starter motor button was positioned on the dash board, on the left near the headlight switch, adjacent to the speedometer. The electric start version wasn't available until December 1972, when it was listed at Lire 1,030,000, and it is difficult to ascertain if any were produced during 1972.

### 750 Sport prototypes

As shown by the application for homologation in October 1971, Fabio Taglioni always envisaged the 750 Ducati as a sporting motorcycle. Very soon after the appearance of the first production 750 GT, Ducati displayed a prototype sporting version. This was a development by longtime Ducati racer Bruno Spaggiari, who ran a racing school for Ducati at that time. The prototype Sport was shown to Italian Concessionaires towards the end of 1971, but was essentially a 750 GT with clip-on handlebars and rear-set footpegs, along with a custom tank and solo seat. Apart from the open carburettors the engine was standard, and this sporting example retained the single front disc and double rear drum brakes. A favourable reaction by dealers to Spaggiari's special led to three prototype 750 Sports a few months later, first shown to the press in Bologna in February, then at the Salone delle Vacanze di Torino. Not only

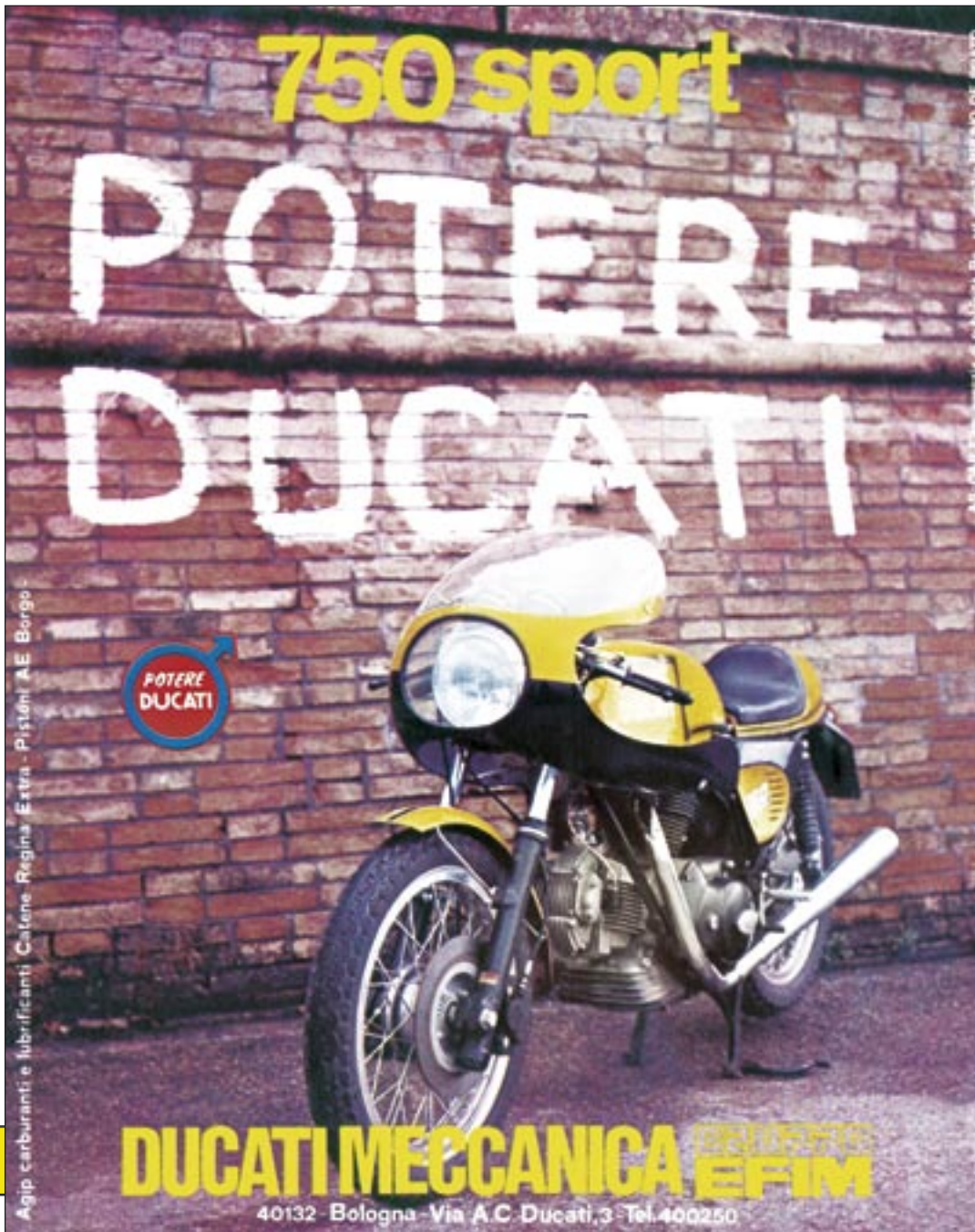
This was the prototype electric start 750 as shown early in 1972. The metalflake tank is the later type, as is the tail-light bracket. (Ducati Motor)

start 750. The 750 was always designed to accept a starter motor between the cylinders, and this prototype featured black-painted outer engine covers. Ostensibly the electric start 750 was identical to the kickstart version. There was a larger Yuasa B68-12-volt 32Ah battery but, as this wouldn't fit the north/south battery tray, it required

#### 1972 750 GT distinguishing features

With 750 production numbering only 519 during 1972, the specification of these models was quite consistent. Engine numbers seemed to finish around 750700, but with the frame numbers going beyond 751000. 1972 750 GTs can be categorised generally with the following equipment:

- Engine with short kickstart shaft (300mm) and kinked lever.
- Lower bevel gears cast and tulip-shaped.
- Amal 930 carburettors and Amal throttle.
- Black-painted frame with small battery mount.
- Fibreglass fuel tank (two types) and side covers (perimeter screw mount).
- Smiths instruments with a mechanical tachometer and early floating brass drive (some European specification examples after engine number 750500 featured Veglia Borletti instruments with an electronic tachometer).
- Some instrument warning lights different, the central ignition light with the longer threaded stem of the wide-case singles.
- Stainless steel 'Inox' mudguards, the front without a centre brace.
- Lockheed front brake caliper and master cylinder.
- Two-piece front hub.
- Leading axle Marzocchi front fork with polished alloy legs and triple clamps.
- Chrome-plated wire headlight clamps with round holes (sometimes oval) for turn signals.
- 305mm rear Marzocchi shock absorbers with polished alloy top covers.
- Round chrome-plated Aprilia switches on the left and right-handlebar.
- Small CEV tail-light (after engine 750500).



A period advertisement for the 1972 750 Sport. Most examples were fitted with the optional half-fairing.

stop bracket was drilled with a 6mm hole for the lower fairing bracket.

The styling followed that of the prototypes, rumoured to be by Leopoldo Tartarini, of Italjet. Tartarini had a long association with Ducati, as a test rider in 1954 and subsequent racer. All the bodywork was fibreglass, built by Ballanti Roberto (also trading as Fibreglas Graziano Ballanti). The Sport's 19-litre fibreglass fuel tank was longer

and narrower than that of the 750 GT, with the moulding featuring recesses for the ignition key and the splayed rear frame tubes. Unlike that of the 750 GT, the chrome-plated fuel filler cap hinged at the rear, opening towards the rider. The official colour was ochre, embedded in the gel coat, and there were the same white 750 GT 'DUCATI' decals on the side of the tank, along with the distinctive black 'Z' stripe decals, with thin black edges, of



The 750 Sport dual seat was cleverly designed and didn't detract from the sporting profile. This example has engine number 755857, frame number 755591.

the 750 Sport was probably built during July 1974, and as these 750 Sport numbers also continue beyond the 750 GT, it suggests the final series of round-case bikes built in 1974 were 750 Sports. There was still occasional inconsistency, with black-case 1973 engines sometimes appearing in these later series chassis. This was a period when Ducati was winding down 750 production, and using some leftover components that were readily available. Despite the occasional engine abnormality, in most respects this series was very consistent in its specification.

This series of 750 Sport was ostensibly identical to the earlier series, but most were for non-US markets, particularly the UK and Australia. The engine and electrical system was as before, and the most obvious update over the other 1974 series was the fitting of a centre-axle Marzocchi fork. This featured black-painted fork legs and

the flat triple clamps of the leading-axle type. Unlike the 750 GT Marzocchi fork that included either a Brembo or Scarab brake connection, this Marzocchi fork only featured a Scarab front brake, with a smaller (278mm) slotted carrier disc. With the caliper behind the fork leg, this fork was basically identical (with the same tubes and internals) to that on the 1973 750 Super Sport but for the four-bolt front mudguard mount. The Scarab master cylinder also featured a black lever, and the clutch lever was the earlier black rounded type.

The other updates were an optional dual seat and passenger footrests. Some of these 750 Sports came with the dual seat fitted, but generally it was only available as an option. Not listed in any spare parts material, the dual seat conversion was cleverly achieved without altering the frame. A bracket fitted over the front seat screw mounts and another attached to the tail-light support. The