





Style Council

When people think of MV Agusta, it's the exotic Remor-designed twin-cam fours that tend to spring to mind. But some of their bread and butter models were pretty cute too, as photographer CHRIS RANDELLS discovered in Adelaide...

For a little 350 pushrod twin with just 3000 miles on the clock, this MV Agusta Sport has had an interesting history.

Bob Jane, the well-known car racer, tyre retailer and motor sport promoter (he owns Calder Park in Melbourne) acquired in 1971 a stock of MV Agustas direct from the factory, in effect becoming the Australian distributor for a marque with an avowed policy of not appointing distributors. The shipment included a number of 750 Sports and a few 175 singles, but mainly comprised 350 twins.

The then joint proprietors of the Adelaide Bob Jane T-Mart franchise were a keen pair of motorcyclists: Reg Kenny and Kevin Hewson. They bought several 350s, one of which they registered as a demonstrator. A second was purchased by Reg Kenny for his own use.

The pair entered the demo model in the 'Advertiser Three Hour' production race at Adelaide International Raceway, with Kenny and noted Adelaide motoring journalist Bob Jennings sharing the saddle. Unfortunately, the bike was retired after being involved in a collision with another two thirds through the race.

Kenny then shot through for an extended



overseas trip, but before he left he asked Jennings to run in the 350 Sport he'd bought earlier. On his return, this machine was put onto the market and Jennings, having experienced the model on both the track and the road, was an eager purchaser at \$900, \$300 under the then list price.

Unlike the 750 four-cylinder models, the 350 Sport had little in common with the 350 and 500 cc DOHC multis that dominated the World Championships in the hands of John Surtees and Giacomo Agostini. The unusual cylinder finning gave the motor, which dates back to the early '50s, more the appearance of twin-port two-stroke single (it is in fact, an OHV four-stroke twin) but with a top speed just shy of 95 mph (about 150 km/h) from the 28 bhp motor and an ability to cruise effortlessly at 75 (120 km/h), there was at least some justification for the extreme cafe racer riding position and blood red paint, complete with decals celebrating MV's 34 World Championships.

The chassis, comprising a single front downtube, massive swingarm plates and incorporating the engine as a stressed member, was dated even in 1971 (it too harked back to the early '50s) but proved more than strong enough to handle the bike's power.

The bike's running gear, on the other hand, was superior to most other lightweights of the time, and contemporary road tests of the 350S raved about the bike's fine suspension and strong brakes (both assisted by the bike's relatively light weight of 143 kg dry), although some found the centre stand inhibited left side cornering clearance and none

spoke well of the six-volt headlight...

But getting back to our story, Bob Jennings got the taste for the little lightweight Italian, which he found handled beautifully, but limited his outings to occasional Sunday runs. He found an hour on the thing was plenty long enough at any one time; with the pushrod parallel twin running easily to 7000 rpm (redline is 7650), there is plenty of high frequency vibration, and riding position is hardly conducive to long distance touring.

As Jennings became more involved in racing motor cars, he found himself riding the bike less and less, and he took the bike off the road for five years. There it stayed unused in Jennings' garage until well-known Adelaide classic enthusiast John Barrass spotted it and offered to give it a 'smarten up'.

When John Barrass decides to smarten a bike up, even one with just a few thousand miles on the clock, he's not talking about an oil change and a polish. He ended up putting in two years (part-time) of meticulous detail.

The bike was totally disassembled, the rims and engine side-plates polished, the spokes replated



ENGINE AND TRANSMISSION

Engine type	OHV parallel twin; gear-driven rear-mounted single camshaft, with pushrods
Capacity	349 cc (63 x 56 mm)
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Power	28 bhp at 7650 rpm
Carburettors	Twin Dell'Ortos with ram tubes
Crankshaft	Roller bearings
Fuel	100-octane racing
Primary drive	Gear
Clutch	Wet, multi-plate
Gearbox	Five speed (one up, four down; right foot shift)
Final drive	Roller chain
Rebuilder	John Barrass, Kevin Fisher

FRAME, SUSPENSION AND BRAKES

Chassis	Single tube; engine as stressed member
Wheelbase	1320 mm
Forks	Telescopic, one way damping, no adjustment
Shocks	Spring dampers, no adjustment
Front brake	Eight-inch, twin leading shoe drum
Rear brake	Eight-inch, single leading shoe drum
Wheels	18-inch Borrani rims
Tyres	Pirelli (2.75 front; 3.25 rear)
Special thanks	John Barrass

and any corroded nuts and bolts replaced with stainless steel items. The frame and bodywork were still in as-new condition, but the swingarm and centrestand earned a fresh powdercoat.

The engine was stripped for examination by John

Barrass and Kevin Fisher but found in perfect shape and so only required a new set of gaskets and a careful reassembly.

The day following the bike's completion,

Bob Jennings rode it to the All Italian Day Display organised by the SA Ducati Owners Club at Glenelg, which attracted over 80 immaculate Italian motorcycles. While the bulk of the bikes on show were Dukes, there was no shortage of tasty Moto Guzzis, Laverdas, Gileras, MVs and Cagivas, all of them vying for the 'Best Other' trophy. That the little MV won in such strong company is a testament to the restoration skills of John Barrass, to whom Bob Jennings offers his special thanks.

