

# **A Tutto Gas**

**297**

**October 2007**

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Recently, Chris Webber wrote about taking the Corsaro along the same route as the Strada. This is evidence that he did just that; the view from White Horse Hill taken in mid-September on a ride from Swindon towards Wantage - a road purpose built for Morinis of all ages...

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**Cover design by Jonathan Kaufman, Cover printing sponsored by NLM**

# Editorial

I am pleased to be able to bring you an issue of *A Tutto Gas* that spans the Morini experience. Pete, our ‘singles’ man, offers some thoughts on the engineering challenges facing the designers of a commuter machine whilst ‘Corsaro Chris’ is still enthusiastic about his new generation Morini. Naturally the membership have been out and about to Lincolnshire and Italy to spread the word and learn more respectively.

I’ve been exploring the back lanes and byways of Nottinghamshire by Morini. The County Council have been busy updating the definitive map and, unlike many local authorities, have recognised a significant number of BOATs and included a map of all of these in their rights of way planning document that can be found online. The terrain is far less challenging than that of the Peak District but it is noticeably less utilised for recreation; which must be a good thing. A number of the BOATs are merely pock-marked roads and can be traversed by a shiny Strada whilst others are more traditional muddy ‘green lanes’ and are better tackled by Kanguro.



In the past I have written about bad experiences aboard my Kanguro but so long as I’m not too tired I enjoy riding it for the simple reason that it is comfortable. The saddle is just firm enough, but not too hard. It is high enough to have a foot of ground clearance but I can still touch the ground. Comfort doesn’t seem to matter to today’s designers obsessed by performance and style!

Adrian Jowett, October 2007

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## Pie Shop Event

### *Berks, Bucks & Oxon Pie Shop Event “Sweeneys”*

On Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2007 the BB&O section will hold the yearly meal at “Sweeneys” pie shop on Castle Street in Reading. All MRC members are welcome. The shop is licensed and parking nearby is easy. To book your seat ‘phone Dave Marlow or Gary Withers. Food orders will be placed at 20:00 so be sure to arrive in time. The cost will be around £10 plus drinks. BB&O section members please note that this event replaces the November meeting at “The Bell”. Also note that the BB&O meeting will be at “The Priory” similar to previous years.

# Chairman's Report

Well, it's been an eventful time for the club since the last ATG. In the third week of September we held our silver jubilee track day. No other one-make club can match our record of 25 annual track days without a break. I will leave the full report to John Sheppard, who deserves fulsome thanks for once again spending a considerable effort organising the event despite, this year, not even getting the chance to ride due to a back injury. The one thing I am pleased to report is that despite a mid week date late in September enough members and friends turned up to avoid making a loss on the event.

My own return from track day was touching farcical (in hindsight) though worrying at the time. I had finished the last session at Cadwell early as my '79 Sport was making low frequency rumbblings and, strangely, the track seemed to very roughly speed but not to be on the plain main bearing was going or the flywheel was loose on the crankshaft. In the morning Dave Mason, Club Secretary, suggested checking the gearbox sprocket: indeed the nut was loose.

The ride home to Bath began well but as I hit towns, first Grantham, then Melton Mowbray, the bike became more and more difficult pulling away and all roads felt rough. As I approached Leicester my options seemed to be call the AA for a relay upgrade to truck me home, drop it on NLM (except I had no map) or continue on and breakdown on the M69 or the Fosse Way. Fate leant a hand – I ran out of fuel on the A46 right under the M1 North junction.

While I waited for the AA to bring petrol I checked the flywheel and crank again to find nothing wrong but, as I screwed the cover back up have a little bird whispered

in my head “what about engine bolts?” and, indeed, it had happened to me before when I replaced the bolts with stainless steel. There is that reputation that stainless doesn't hold or stick as well as plain steel and sure enough the rear bolts were, just, a touch loose but enough to allow the engine to bounce around and throw the compliance of the suspension out.

Five minutes later the bolts are all tight and half an hour later the AA drop me at Leicester Forest Services to fill up then I fly home.

The second notable occasion was the visit to the factory the following Monday. Eight members made the event and we were made very welcome by the factory and enjoyed a short break in Bologna, a renaissance city which makes British medieval towns & buildings look like poor cousins.

This was my first experience of getting airlines, booking a ticket costing 79 pence (!) only to end up paying over £50 when fees & charges were included. Still, it was a pleasant flight and although Forlì airport is 754 metres South-East of Bologna there was a bus waiting to take us straight to Bologna bus station and on the way back it was easy to catch a train.

It was a shame that no-one from Britain was able to ride out but it was close after trackday which left little time for a relaxed ride across the continent. I know Chris is already talking about another visit in a couple of years time: maybe then we can have a riding contingent.

Again there is a separate report on the factory, by Chris & Diane Webber, so I'll say no more than offer commiserations to Andy Shaw who had made arrangements for accommodation & flight when he badly injured his knee in a speedway race which

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prevented him from joining in; I hope Andy will be able to make the next trip when it is arranged.

Stepping back, I reflect on the longer term aims of the club and how it might have a greater impact.

So why don't you tell me why you joined, why you've stayed and why, you sometimes think about not renewing. My postal address, e-mail address & phone number are all in *ATG*. The club doesn't exist because I want to run it but because you want to belong. Tell me what you value, and, what you don't care about.

Finally, I'd like to say a few words about the Classic & Motorcycle Mechanics Show at the Staffordshire County Showground in October. In the calendar of bike show throughout the year this is, perhaps, the most relevant for Morinis. Although it shows motorcycles from the sixties, concentrates on models from the Sixties, Seventies & Eighties: the years when Morinis were groundbreaking and successful.

This is the show that puts Morinis in context, where you are most likely to find the alternatives, the competitors, to the singles and 72° degree twins. For a change, this year we had none of the Sports, Stradas and off-road models but three singles from the Sixties and a 400cc Dart on display. Roy Masters showed his 150cc Corsaro (still waiting for the correct tank and seat to turn up), Chris Webber lent his 400cc Dart, looking like it had earned its miles but was up for many more and Shirley Sutton showed her two, very nicely, restored Corsaro 125cc bikes with spot-on paint work. Shirley is a dedicated exhibitor, staying on the showground, chatting to other exhibitors, camping or camper-vanning in the evenings, and sleeping in her 4x4 overnight (she insists it's no trouble because of her height).

The club owes a great deal of gratitude to Roy Master for coming up from Leighton Buzzard on Friday night to help set up and, particularly, to John Parbery who sorted out all the paperwork beforehand, brought along all the club merchandise and even trailered in Chris's Dart so that it could be there all weekend.

Jem Moore

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**Calendar** **ATG sample**

18<sup>th</sup> November 2007 MRC Members & Committee Meeting in Leicestershire (contact Dave Mason, page 15, for details)

21<sup>st</sup> November 2007 Sweeney's Pie Shop meeting in Reading

26<sup>th</sup> November 2007 VMCC Boxing Day runs (see website for the choice)

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> February 2008 28<sup>th</sup> Bristol Classic Motorcycle Show, Royal Bath & West Showground, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 6QN

26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> April 2008 28<sup>th</sup> International Classic Motorcycle Show, Staffordshire County Showground, Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0BD

12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2008 VMCC Festival Of 1000 Bikes, Mallory Park, Kirkby Mallory, Leicestershire, LE9 7QE

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2008 Founders Day 2008, Stanford Hall, Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE17 6DH

18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008 15<sup>th</sup> Classic & Motorcycle Mechanics Show, Staffordshire County Showground, Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0BD

# Morini's 9½; Ridden at Last

The back to back test you've all been waiting for?

Well - I rode the 9½ yesterday and what a great bike! Lovely engine, muted bark and so easy to ride through the corners. Mind, I was comparing it to a GT1000 which a friend also wanted to ride. What a difference 20 years in design can make; the Ducati engine felt reluctant to rev, and rough by comparison with the Morini, especially from low revs...

But before we get down to the nitty gritty, a brief history lesson... Morini were reborn in 2004, launching two models, a 1200 cc "naked" called Corsaro (Pirate) and acknowledging through styling cues the famous 250 Biabero from the 1960s, which won three Italian championships, and the 9½; a milder version quoted at 998 cc and having bore and stroke of 107 by 55.5 mm in contrast to the Corsaros' 107 by 66. The name was doubtless meant to recall the classic 3 ½ models of the 70s, and the design echoes the touring Scada model with spoked wheels, wide bars and upright riding position.

Whilst the 1200 engine (actually a 1187...) claimed to produce 140 bhp, the milder 998 of the 9½ only produced 103, or so the story went. Fast forward two years and the 9 ½ has appeared across Europe, but somewhere along the line Morini have decided that instead of an extremely short stroke of just 55.5 mm the bike would run with the same stroke as the Corsaro, which is still massively over-square. Instead, a redesign of pistons, revise cams and re-mapping the ECU reduces power (105 Hp) and improves fuel economy, all good things for a useable street bike. It also leaves open the tantalising option of a 800/1000cc machine of reduced bore, and also a range of single cylinder five and six-hundredcs, to reference the worlds fastest single legend from the 1960s and the 60s much in the style of Lambertinis' earlier generation of V-twin machines from the 70s.

But prior to riding the 9½ I was to experience the Ducati GT1000, one of the more styled machines recently introduced to reference the early GTS860 and 900 models from the late 1970s and 80s. With plenty of chrome, an upright riding position, traditional dual speed and twin dial instruments the bike certainly looks the part. Both fuelling and starting are up to the minute with the engine started with a single press of the button, settling down to a steady, muted Ducati rumble. Andrew, my riding companion, leads us away onto the 40 limit and then through the busy village of Three Legged Cross, out into the empty countryside where we hope for traffic free roads...



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The Ducati is light and nimble through the lanes, with an easy willingness to accelerate on the straight, picking up cleanly from 3,000 revs with only a hint of vibration. The wide handlebars help control through the twists and turns of the Dorset countryside, but for secondary information the instruments are next to useless – a triumph of style over substance? The seat is a trifle narrow, and I feel perched above the bike rather than a part of it – very much like the bikes it references and close to the feeling on a Morini Strada. It's all rather fun...

All too soon its time to swap, and we pull in to a layby at a village post office. A quick chat and then Andrew leads off again at a bit of a lick (he knows the roads, and has to get back to Three Cross for a phone call in twenty minutes). The Morini's bars are slightly wider than the Ducati, there is a small clear screen, and the same instrument panel as the Corsaro. The seat is broad, with a subtle rib to support the rider's bottom – a point I appreciate immediately in accelerating to keep with Andrew. The exhaust has a tingly bark through the single silencer, but the motor itself is a revelation. Smooth from tick-over, with no vibration, it pulls willingly right around the rev counter, and the sound becomes a staccato roar, much more in keeping with the feel of the bike. Like the Ducati it takes the tight twisty bends with confidence, but on hard breaking there is a pronounced dive from the front fork. Another result of slightly longer fork travel compared to the Corsaro model might be a potential for slight weaving, illustrated

when riding over a rut in the road which seemed to upset the ride for a moment. The overall impression is of a bike that can be ridden with little effort, which is well proportioned and with a good riding position. Both machines were well finished and looked the part, but the Morini doesn't try to ape its predecessor – styling cues may reference the past but this is a modern machine. Andrew's opinion (as an unbiased view)? "I should have ridden the 9½ second - it spoilt me and made this Ducati feel old fashioned and rough by comparison..."



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For me there was only one major problem with it. It wasn't starting (engine span up to 2,000 revs and settled back to a steady tick over at 1,500 after a few seconds), weight or comfort, nor even a slight buffeting at over the legal limit (despite a fitted screen). No - it was having ridden down on the Corsaro, and then having a short ride on a Veloce after I got back to the dealers.

But that, as they say, is another story...

Chris Webber

Thanks to 3X for the use of the bikes, the hospitality and the interesting chat!

# Out and About at Sleaford

I have only owned my 1982 500 special for about a month so I thought I would enter it into the Sleaford Historic Car and Motorcycles Show on 1<sup>st</sup> September. I was too late to submit details to be included in the programme so I just turned up on the day.

I have been to this show a couple of times before as visitor and a very friendly sociable show it is too. Held in the grounds of the local senior school just off the town centre entry by visitors is free and, being held on a Saturday, lots of the local populace meander through the exhibits, many who would not think of going to a car and bike show if a special journey had to be made.

The weather was good for my 70 mile journey to Sleaford; bearing in mind the deluge we all suffered at VMCC Festival of 1000 bikes the sun was very welcome. Vehicular entrance to the show took a little finding in the historic town but once there my unscheduled entry was dealt with quickly and I was directed to the correct spot for 1971 - 1985 motorcycles. Being a, "park in the order in which one arrives", I ended up between a nice, shiny 1976 Suzuki "Kettle" (GT750) and a pristine 1977 Honda GL1000 Goldwing. Now, my Morini is very shiny and in superb condition for its age but I did think I was up against it. As it turned out I was right to be apprehensive, more of which anon. Next door to the Kettle was an exceedingly shiny Benelli Tornado 650S and then a Laverda Jota, this one not quite so shiny as it is obviously ridden lots (as they all should be!).

The next time slot along was for 1961 - 1970 motorcycles the last exhibit in line being a superb Ducati single with that fabulous "jelly mould" tank. As well as a number of British classics there were some very nice old BMWs including an immaculate 1932 R2, one of only a very, very few in the country. Other motor cycle classes in the show are as follows: pre 1950, 1950 - 1960, post 1986 and Combination or Trike. All in all there must have been approximately 80 bikes there and this included two old Guzzis, again not in the programme, one of which would have won the "Rat Bike Award" had there been one. It did sound good though!

One of the other exhibitors, Triumph Bonneville I think, commented that there were many more Italian bikes than normal and that it was good to see; perhaps we can get a few more Morinis there next year and educate the general public because what follows is an example of the most common discussion I had whilst sitting on my bike:

*Visitor* What's that then? *Me* A Morini 500 special

*Visitor* A what? *Me* A Morini 500 special

*Visitor* Who makes them then? *Me* Moto Morini

*Visitor* Who? *Me* Moto Morini

*Visitor* Is it Japanese then? *Me* No, it is a small Italian company

*Visitor* Ooh! I've never heard of them

There then followed an abbreviated history lesson about Morinis at which point said visitor departs with eyes glazing over! Only a very small minority of non-motorcycle



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visitors had heard of Morinis so we all have some work to do. Then again, perhaps we are better keeping such things to ourselves.

Judging at this show is undertaken by the show visitors on a tick sheet at the back of the programme, posted into a box in the organisers office and then votes added up for prize giving at about 16:00 hours. Trophies are a cut above the average being polished pistons mounted with brass gudgeon pins and aluminium bases, nicely engraved and created by a local company.

As above, my intuition was correct; in my age group the winner was the Honda GL1000, runner up Suzuki Kettle. The little Ducati won its group though (helped by my vote). The show seems to get bigger every year and is a good day out. Coinciding with the show there was an excellent farmers market only yards away in the market place and, tiring of silly questions (see above), I played truant and bought some superb sausages and pork pies from a stall from Redhill Farm, Gainsborough. You really get to experience life with a Morini 500 Special.

The show organisers have a web site which has archive footage of the shows; [www.oden.co.uk/sccms](http://www.oden.co.uk/sccms) which is well worth a look. At the time of writing, photographs of this show are not yet included but I am sure they will be soon. Regrettably, I have none as my own camera died a few days previously.

It was disappointing not to win a prize, though I did not really expect one, but it was an interesting experience and a first for me. I was speaking to one of the organisers of the Stinkwheel and Italiana Real Classic Motorcycle Show at Beaumanor Hall on September 16 so, yes you've guessed it, I'm going to do it all over again. Its taken me 30 years plus to achieve an ambition to own (and ride) a Morini so it appears there is no stopping me. If you can bear it I will submit the next instalment of 'Morini's out and about' in due course.

Paul Jenkins

## Subscription Renewal

ATG sample

There appears to have been a problem with the renewal slips that went out in the last magazine. Some people got slips when they weren't needed and some got no renewal slips when they were due for renewal. Some luck people got a renewal date that was complete fiction!!

I have reloaded the master copy and everything appears O.K. have no idea what went wrong, it's easy to put it down to "a computer error" or more likely human error on my part is to blame.

If any one has a problem please get in touch, either on e mail or Phone

Cheers

Les Skinner

# Fast Company

Sometime back I read a review of a book called “Fast Company”. Roland Brown pronounced it the best book he’d read about the motorcycling industry. Ever. Well, before you get as excited as I did, don’t, because it isn’t. What it is in large is a Rough Guide to the east coast Italian gay night club scene, along with a homage to designer labels and hedonism. I strongly advise reading it with a copy of “Harper & Queens” in one hand and “Hello!” in the other. Paris Hilton would love it, I in large parts, scarcely even understood it (but then my wardrobe does mostly come from Millets). Be warned, this is not an Italian version of Bert Hopwood’s seminal “What ever happened to the British motorcycle industry?”

Saying this it is a crying shame, as it appears to be the result of a train crash between two completely unrelated books, one of which undoubtedly could have been the book Roland Brown talked about. In the first hand account of the inside workings of Ducati during the period of the Pacific Group take over. Gross paints a picture of an eccentric, even comic group of characters singly unsuited to industrial management, fighting through to success. Crippled by the same designer label worship with which Gross himself seems fixated it is a captivating picture of the Ducati management fighting amongst itself as much with the Japanese, or the unions, or the banks, or the.....

So why should this be of interest to a Morini owner? Well (half) the book gives a colourful account of the workings of an Italian motorcycle company, in Bologna, at the turn of the ‘noughties’. It offers particular insight into the industrial relations, knee jerk decision making, non-scientific marketing, and general ‘feast or famine’ roller coaster ride which was (is?) Ducati. We in Britain read about it, almost weekly, in

MCN, but without the illumination which Gross’s observations provide.

Additionally, as a cameo, designer Pierre Terreblanche appears, one of the few people in the book who actually seem remotely interested in motorcycles. It is in the chapters covering his passions and torments (the most interesting) that Gross writes of walking through Terreblanche’s house, littered with design icons and, well, litter, to be confronted by a gleaming red Morini as the centre pieces of his living room. Enough said really. Thinking back, it seems to match what Hugo Wilson said, many years ago in Bike magazine, about Terreblanche’s appreciation of Moto Morini. I’m sure this book will hit all the right spots, and as such I am quite willing to concede that David Gross knows a lot more about targeted marketing than I ever will. For Morini owners, well, don’t trust me, try it yourself.

You might end up being enlightened, or at least being a little more of a day resort for yourself.

It’s a US book, ISBN 10: 0-374-28133-5 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, but you can find it on Amazon for £6.15.

None of our line in motorcycling literature is a bit more catholic watch out for a forthcoming Mick Walker book on Derek Minter. Talking to Mick at the recent Festival of 1000 bikes I happened to mention that Minter was the only non-Italian to ride the Moto Morini 250cc Grand Prix machine, which prompted Mick to mention the forthcoming publication. He promised it would cover this episode in Minter’s career, Mick having recently interviewed him on this subject among others, so hopefully we can expect more than a couple of paragraphs. I am reliable informed that Derek Minter rarely wore Prada.

Pete Crawford

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# An Unforgettable Visit

What a day to arrive! As we walk through the Morini factory the announcement is made that Franco Morini Motori SpA is no more – from today the Company becomes Moto Morini and is headed by a direct relative of the original company. And despite the pressures of such a momentous occasion, everyone in the Company goes out of their way to make us welcome. From the President to the storekeeper, ladies of the production line, Snr Lambertini and the hero of the day, Gherardo Morico our guide, we are treated like royalty.

Monday, an early breakfast, a 9:15 taxi for seven, with a Moto Morini in pursuit and we arrive at the factory gates to be greeted by Gherardo. Now here I digress slightly, but the following Morini was having problems. A concerned Gherardo has the machine wheeled around to the workshop entrance, and the bike is taken in to be stripped down and repaired, to be returned to Sander, its owner, three days later with a total upgrade to the latest specification. Service with passion.



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The gang, from left to right; Dave, Diane, Jem, Anne, Gary, Anne, Chris and Sander

It starts for most with an early Sunday flight from Stansted to Bologna. For others, who prefer a slight detour, it starts some time earlier with Le Shuttle and then via Dijon and Lucerne to Bologna for the Sunday. Then again, one other decides to travel via Austria, on a Morini; but it takes all sorts to make a factory visit. So there we are, all eight of us, Sunday evening, drinks in hand, excitedly anticipating the morrow and the factory visit.

Our visit starts in the new Company's reception area, where we leave bags before moving into the final assembly area, with an apologetic Gherardo expressing concern that there may not be much to interest us. Little work is being carried out on the production line today, as engine assembly runs ahead of that for complete bikes. He anticipates that we will spend a couple of hours in the building, that being the length of time it normally takes the school trips, and will then meet with the man he calls his headmaster – Signor Lambertini – for lunch back at reception.

Little did Gherardo realise that what he takes for granted would stop us in our tracks. A row of red Corsaro Veloce machines forms a line against a wall, with others in serried ranks awaiting dispatch – the first photo opportunity. Some machines have just been brought back from Australia,

including a 9½ in a new colour scheme, black with red frame and piping, with “1200” under the 9½ legend on the silencer. Apparently this is to explain to prospective owners that the engine is a full 1197 ccs...



Spot the new colour scheme - in the assembly area at the Morini factory we spotted amongst a batch of bikes just returned from the Australian show; a 9½ with a red frame and black and red tank scheme. This is the bike fitted with a 1200cc logo beneath the 9½...

What to look at; like children in a sweet shop we gawped on with our mouths open. At this point I am glad that I had brought several films for the SLR and the prospect looms of deleting some holiday snaps from the digital camera! Photographs of all our completed machines on assembly cradles, a machine part stripped down and banks of engines awaiting use are quickly taken as we split up to examine minutiae.

From the final assembly and dispatch areas we move onto the engine production line. Ladies on the line are putting together small capacity Franco Motori engines, working with practised ease with the small components. Christine and Anna bashfully pose for photographs as Gherardo explains the methods of

production. Sub assemblies are brought together with the engines mounted in cradles, components stored in bins along the line to be close at hand when required. In all, very similar to the visit of another factory in the early 1980s...



Christine on the assembly line - women are preferred for this job as they have smaller, more dexterous fingers...

Along the line we are able to examine individual items in detail. Sander and David pick up cylinder liners and pistons; the latter displaying flat crowns with valve cut outs and residual skirts providing little more than ring grounds and support for gudgeon pins. For those of us more used to 62mm pistons the bore is colossal at 107mm, and a photo of one is sure to make it into next year's calendar. Although most parts are

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sourced in Italy, Morini use other component suppliers where required – the pistons are from America, the oil cooler on the Corsaro from Austria (as used for KTM), flywheel and some similar components from Japan.

Gherardo is at pains to point out that nothing comes from poor quality suppliers. Morini's quality checks are rigorous, and anything that fails inspection is identified by a red sticker, and the production batch is returned to the supplier for remedial action. We see the stock pens with rows of parts awaiting the production run; rocker covers, crankcases, clutch covers and many other components, all brought in from the goods inward area at the front of the factory. Everything is stored and kept in an extremely orderly fashion, impressive in its

apparent simplicity, labels and bins ensuring that will be found. It's noon and we break for coffee, some of the best that we have had from a machine. Gherardo explains that with the integration of Morini and Franco Motori there is only one set of overheads and management, with unnecessary bureaucracy done away with. The walls between the two factories can be broken down, both metaphorically and physically – parts used by one company but sourced from the other were previously invoiced from one to the other, but this is now not necessary. At this point a smiling Snr Morini arrives to greet us all enthusiastically. After hands are shaken and photographs taken he welcomes us to the factory and hopes that we will enjoy our day before

moving on, assuring us that he would see us again before our departure.



The day of our visit, September 24<sup>th</sup>, was the day Franco Morini Motori became Moto Morini... Mr Morini visited all parts of the factory, but still had time to talk to his visitors from England and the Netherlands. Photo courtesy of G Morico, our guide for the day.

After the break we move into the quality control area described before, noting the boxes with their green and red stickers close to the goods inwards section of the factory. Testing of components forms a major part of this activity, and a separate humidity controlled area is staffed by a small team of technicians who examine selected items to ensure compliance with the strict specifications laid down

Then it is on to an engine stock area, where 400cc automatic engines used in city cars so popular in Bologna and other Italian cities await dispatch. The company has a diverse range of products, and is constantly innovating to be one step ahead of the competition, which includes the cheap labour areas of the far East. Even allowing for transport costs, simple small engines can often be sourced cheaper from China and Eastern Europe than from Italy – and so a

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detailed knowledge of the market and technology is required to stay ahead.

It is lunchtime and so we return downstairs, where an impressive spread of traditional Italian fare has been laid out. Individual pizzas, Parma ham in pastry, savoury and sweet rolls ensure that all tastes are catered for. The centrepiece of the table is a savoury panettone cake sliced horizontally and made up as sandwiches. As we gather around, we are joined by Snrs Lambertini and Gianluca Lanaro, who is the Marketing and Sales Director, together with others from marketing. After more handshakes and introductions, we settle down for lunch and conversation...

Gherardo does an excellent job of translation as we enthusiastically talk to the designer of two generations of Morini, Jen and De Bilio. I brought some tokens of our appreciation for Snr Lambertini and Lanaro – copies of the current calendar and mugs, illustrating the models from a single to the water-cooled twins together with some club greeting cards. These are well received, and the mug inspires the joyful cry of “All my bikes!” from Snr Lambertini. He then leafs through the calendar, smiling as he carefully goes from page to page; each page and picture tell a story. His delight was apparent for all to see as he regaled us with stories of the “London Grey” 500, the classic lines of the 3½ Sport, the tensions in Cagiva-owned Morini caused by the Dart, and the secret behind the Excalibur. [Enough, in fact

to form the content of a separate article...] We also talk with Snr Lanaro of the market and ambitions of Morini, the plans for the next few years, of singles and a wider range of models.



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The Marketing Director's office (and what an office!)

As a fitting end to lunch we retrace our steps through the factory, entering the office of Snr Lanaro, which is also home to Provini's 1963 250 GP single, for most of us the most talismanic individual motorcycle on the planet, as well as a well worn racer of the 50s and an ISDT single similar to those used by the Trophy winning team at the IoM Six Day Trial in the early 70's – where I recall Lambertini first tried out the design of the flat head for the ground breaking V twins. In an adjacent cabinet are row upon row of



## A tutto gas 297

trophies – not as extensive as in years gone by; many have commandeered by others when the company was taken over by Cagiva in the late 1980s. Some may dream of such bikes for the garage; but to have them in the office! Fittingly, we pose for a photo beside the Provini racer...

From here it was a short step to the engine testing bays where completed machines are run prior to dispatch, bringing us almost full circle to our starting point. Our taxi driver had reappeared by this time, waiting with us whilst Sander and Gherardo arrange his extended stay to enable the Corsaro to be repaired at the factory. One factory was obviously very much like another to our driver, as he left us after a few minutes, choosing instead to wait for our visit to finish out in the warm Bologna afternoon sun. Once he rejoined us, Gherardo smiled his head pointed out a securely closed double door. “I cannot let you in there”, he indicated; “although most development work is done outside the factory this is where we test prototypes” Despite this, we see some

development work; rear hand grabs for the 9½, revised bottom fork with radial brake callipers and the like. No photography allowed in this area!

To close the visit we assemble outside once again, where Snrs Lambertini, Lanaro and Morini all come to say their goodbyes. Snr Lambertini poses with his latest child, the Corsaro Veloce, followed by Gherardo and Gianluca, all smiles. Snr Morini shows us a photograph on his phone of the latest Morini, to be launched at the Milan show in November, mulling over the name, which has yet to be formally announced. I say that it must take passion to be involved with such machines. “Passion yes, but also economics” he replies, with a twinkle in his eye. I thank him again for his time, congratulating him on the historic forming of the new Morini, as if I remember 1/2 way back to the factory gate, our memorable visit at an end. It is 3 o’clock as I shake the hand of our guide, Gherardo Morico, one of the luckiest men in the world, a man who works for Morini for a living...

Chris and Diane Webber



Any colour you like as long as its red - Veloces lined up for dispatch

# Club Officials

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**President:** Gabriella Morini      **Vice President:** Simon Pancheri

**Chairman**

Jem Moore, chairman@morini-riders-club.com

**Secretary**

Dave Mason,

**Treasurer**

Chris Laughton,

**Technical Guru**

George Lane.

**Editor**

Adrian Jowett, Email: editor@morini-riders-club.com

**Products Secretary**

Jem Moore,

**Public Relations Officer**

To be confirmed

**Librarian**

Dave Marlow,

**Motorcycle Action Group Rep & BMF Liaison**

Andy Carrott,

**Membership Secretary**

Les Skinner, membersahip@morini-riders-club.com

**International Events Coordinator**

Alan Jennings,

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ATG sample

# **Captain Corsaro gets his Sea Legs**

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At the 2006 Manx, I'd taken the Corsaro to the Isle of Man with eldest son on his Honda and youngest son (a strapping 24 year old) on the pillion. The bike coped well, but here we are in 2007 and it's the TT and I'm ridding solo...

In the interim, I've invested in a tank bag and cover to help with the luggage. Tony's CRB 600 still has to carry most of our clothes, but at least I can get some stuff on the Morini. The tank cover really suits the bike – being black it compliments the overall colour scheme – it probably wouldn't look so good with the red Corsaro – perhaps they'll bring one out in matching red?

Most press reports on the Morini eulogise over the engine, rate the handling but feel somewhat let down by the bikes lack of "presence" when parked. Spending over £8,000 on a bike is supposed to make people want to feel that they've bought something that others want, I guess. I can sympathise with that viewpoint, but the reverse is also true – and just like the earlier Morinis if everyone wanted one there wouldn't be enough to go around. The important point is whether the purchaser likes what he (or she) has brought, and if it delivers what it promises. On this count the Morini does, in spades....

Our trip to the Island brought out some salient points; the bike is comfortable over distances, tracks well, uses too much fuel even at steady speeds on motorways, goes like stink and holds the road, on wide open or twisty roads alike. It can hold its head high in company with similar machines, and the wide spread of power, and the style of its delivery, means it can be ridden however you as the rider feel. Its apparent bulk when handling in the garage vanishes as soon as you're in the saddle, and although the seat height is high at 800mm, a lowered version is available (and my son at 5 foot 8 inches managed fine when he bought it).

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**ATG sample**



Problems encountered during the first year and 5,500 miles (8,800 km) of ownership have been limited to a one-off lack of starting, a short period of over-rich running cured at the second service and a recurring need to tweak the throttle when starting from cold. Servicing costs are £110 plus whatever else you buy when at the dealers, a fraction of comparable V twin from another Italian V twin. I'll probably need a new rear tyre fairly soon as the original is starting to square off, although there remains a legal tread pattern at present. The tyres are superb, giving feel in both wet and dry, although the front forks judder slightly under heavy braking.

At night the headlight gives a good beam on both dip and main, and the instruments are easy to read under all but the brightest lighting conditions. There are a useful range of options with these, including a clock, low fuel light, gear selected indicator, ambient temperature and even a maximum speed log (!). The mirrors still work, giving a useful rear view – essential when the run across the Mountain is one way during TT fortnight and you're in traffic...

All in all, it is a fantastic bike to ride; Lambertini and Morini have done a stunning job, and all I can do is thank my lucky stars that I get to ride it whenever I want to...

Corsaro Chris

## Remember Summer?

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ATG sample



# **No More Darting Around For Me!**

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Those of you who have been taking *ATG* for twenty-odd years or so will have noticed the odd article of my exploits on the Kanguro and Dart that I owned, both of which were the first ones of each model that Stuart at NLM sold. The Kanguro was sold to pastures new some 4 years ago. Sadly, I'm no longer to ride the Dart any more, so that's been sold now as well. I was diagnosed with a lung problem some 15 years ago, and now have got to the stage where it's not possible to ride. I tried the Dart a couple of weeks back, but found that I was gasping after just half a mile, and it took me about half an hour to recover in a layby before I was able to ride it home.

Anyhow, this is just to let you know how I've enjoyed a few exploits over the years with the Morini Riders Club, and have enjoyed the company of all those I've met. The highlight has to be back in 1995, when I tagged along with a few of you down to the Italian Morini Club's annual gathering at Morano sul Po, near Casale Monferrato. That was some trip! I travelled down with John Shepperd on his 500, and Pete Mumford on his Kanguro X2, which had a couple of hiccups with the ignition coil! Poor Pete eventually arrived there in a hire car! After the Club meeting, there were a few more of us who travelled up to Lake Orta for a few days. Phil and Sally were there, as were Ann Cooper and her partner Gary Withers, and Mark and Claire Bridger. Claire hadn't long passed her test, and had a car run into her not long before the trip. Mark had repaired her bike, which was a Morini 250 with a belt drive conversion. Their friends accompanied us as well, but for the life of me I can't remember their names! They were 2-up on a Yamaha Virago 550. That was the only time I camped – ever – and I

carried all the stuff on the Dart, including a small folding chair – with a back! Even back then I needed to be comfortable!! I still remember how Sally assisted me in putting my tent up – in the dark – with a few of the other riders. It's a relief that I had a good night's sleep. Of course, the biggest laugh was probably on me – we camped at a place called Megeve, and the next morning it was sunny, and I was on my little chair drinking a coffee and just soaking in the views. I then uttered a few words “What a great view – just like an Alpine village!”, which led to hoots of laughter at the old duffer of the group! “It IS an Alpine village!” they chorused!! Yes, it really WAS a great holiday!

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Next year I took Pat, my wife, over to show her some of the places – yes, two 57 year olds on a Dart! We didn't do the same route, and didn't camp, but went down through France to Switzerland, then down to Megeve, where I took her to the same campsite for a coffee, just to show her the fabulous view. Again, a great trip!

Of course, the Morini Track days have ALWAYS been great! The first one I went to was at Mallory Park, where I rode my Kanguro, and my sons 1963 250 Aer Macchi. Since 1990 it's always been on the Dart, except for the rainy ones, when I didn't go! I went last year, but had to do the odd recovery lap after a couple of quick laps, which puzzled at least ONE of the other riders. Highlights? Going round the OUTSIDE of my son Martin on his Ducati Paso up the hill! But he FLEW by me towards Park Corner! AND doing 120 miles on-track another year!

So, all in all, I've had a great time with my Morinis for the past 22 years. I hope you enjoyed my various tales! And thanks to all of you.

Bye!

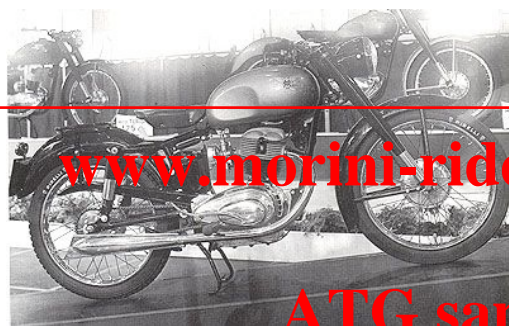
Ken Philp



## When Less Requires More

I had an enquiry the other day from Alan Hay whose very nice 250 Settebello has appeared a couple of times in *ATG* recently. He was having problems with poor head/rocker gear lubrication and an engine which seemed to be running its top end dry. At distance I could only come up with a few suggestions, none of which seemed to offer the solution, but it did get me thinking again about one of the anomalies I've noticed with the earlier 175/250 series engines.

With the exception of the present 1200 series V-twins only one Morini production motorcycle has ever had direct lubrication to its cylinder head. The least tuned and under powered/under stressed of the lot. The original 175 Turismo. This had always struck me as odd, as its inclusion in the design would have meant increased machining and material costs over those incurred in the production of its more sporting (and expensive) bed fellows. Odd, but I'd never given it much thought.



In pondering Alan's problem I asked was he being too gentle with the engine, as only when the oil was good and hot would the top-end lubrication system start to work? I pointed out that just like the V-Twins, too many short trips or constant short-shifting and under-revving could bring about rapid rocker spindle and

bush wear. This wasn't the case, but it did make me speculate on the reason for the direct oil feed on the Turismo.

So under stressed is the engine, with a low 6.5 compression ratio and super mild cam timing (the engine is normally quoted at 8.5hp) that I think the engines effectively 'under heat' and never get up to a decent operating temperature. Under such a scenario I doubt the oil mist system could have been relied upon (especially in the case of short commuter hops – the very sort of trip the bike was designed and destined for) and hence the need to incorporate direct pumped feed.

So are there any lessons to be learnt from this? Well only that like Victorian fathers thrashing their offspring "for their own good" we should continue to thrash our Morinis, be they singles or twins, for the very same reason!

Pete Crawford



# Oil Shortage

After the article about my run to St Andrews I have had some serious problems with the Settebello.

I made a trip to Edinburgh, but from the start I felt that there was very little power. Nevertheless I kept going in the hope that things would improve. Unfortunately things went from bad to worse and I only just managed to get home.

When I removed the rocker cover, I was able to blow away the brass bearing dust as the rockers were completely DRY, not just lacking oil, and one of the rocker bearings was worn away to nothing.

I asked Peter Crawford if he could help, but he has never heard of the problem. On further investigation, when removing the cylinder, it was also dry with a

scored bore and engine then had

To my surprise mouse-like pile the inlet to the discovered that

owner had put a sump to collect not fixed it to had stuck to the pump, thus pump



piston. The to be stripped. there was a of dirt around oil pump. I also a previous magnet in the with and the sump and it inlet of the oil blocking the completely.

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ATG sample

After a lot of deliberation, we decided to clean the piston and bore and reassemble the engine. The engine subsequently started after one kick, but there was some piston slap when cold. This improved as the engine heated up and it is now very smooth with plenty of power. When the rocker cover was again removed, there was plenty of oil, which showed the pump was working - a great relief, as I was worried that it could have been affected by loss of oil.

I have now done about 50 careful miles and all seems to be well for the present. The 250V.2C is excellent and very comfortable on a long trip, even with my arthritic right elbow and wrist.

Does anyone else have a problem with the indicators? If I have the headlights on, the indicators fail after about half an hour. A weak generator? Any help or advice will be much appreciated. I attach another photo in a famous location.

Alan Hay

# Factory Tools

There has been much talk over the last few years about the club providing the special factory tools for holding various bits still while nuts are undone or for lulling bits off. The club has run a tool-hire scheme but it has hit the usual problems of tools not being returned promptly and too many members wanting the same tool at the same time. Discussions moved on to the club providing the tools for sale rather than hire, if the price could be kept low enough. However we stumbled at the question of how we source the tools – who would manufacture them and who would provide the specification or CAD file (let's face it, cheap manufacturing these days is down to computers).

So, earlier this year, I talked to North Leicester Motorcycles about what tools they can supply and they responded with the following prices:

Primary gear nut tool	46.01.6	£18.73
Exhaust nut spanner	00.00.00	£9.30
Flywheel puller	40.01.17	£7.80
Cam pinion puller	2.00.61	£28.73
Clutch holder	94.01.76	£22.47
Rotor holder (k/s)	49.01.71	£27.54 (to use strap wrench)
Rotor holder (k/s)		use strap wrench
Primary gear holder	49.01.71	£20.00
Chain sprocket holder	49.01.74	£15.35

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**ATG sample**

The fat washer for removing the camshaft pulley (used in conjunction with a three legged puller) is the only item missing. I do not see how the club can compete at these prices nor do I think it serves us to compete with NLM.

The club has limited resources and needs to invest them wisely. We will never be as big as the Vincent Owners Club and able to manufacture all parts (and there are far more varieties of Morinis than Vincents) or even support operations such as the Matchless & AJS Spares scheme with full time staff. Where we can make a difference is in spreading knowledge of what members have learnt about Morinis in their lifetimes of ownership. I believe that the handbooks, parts catalogues and the (work in progress) workshop manual are the value that we, as a club, are able to offer.

Jem Moore

# Morini Mart

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Adverts include the [issue] when they first appeared. They will be retained for up to three issues if space permits. Please let me know if you want an advert removing or continuing.

## **BIKES FOR SALE**

**1958 Morini Sbarazzino** Superb, usable bike. Original condition. Only 1800 miles but with beautifully repainted tank and side panels with all correct stickers, and well-recovered seat. Otherwise unrestored. Will sell to best offer, and

**1980 Morini Camel** Mark One. Slightly modified but largely original. Fitted Brembo disc but original drum wheel and forks. Excellent condition. Again, will sell for best offer, and

**1980 Morini 500** Needs a little TLC but not much. It's a NLM bike and well serviced. Bright red tank, side panels *etc.* in perfect condition. Frame needs touching up, not refinishing. Chrome exhausts good. NLM stainless silencers. No bits missing. Needs brakes sorting out – all bits here. No tax or MOT. A light project.

## **Spare**

**Morini Camel 501** large tank side panels etc. headlight fairings etc. All restored in original blue with a set of stickers.

**1985 Camel 501** rolling chassis

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## **Non-Morini**

## **ATG sample**

~~**1965 MZ ES 175/1** For sale due to ill health. This bike is complete and a runner with good engine and gearbox etc., all ancillary items are in working order. It is not yet UK registered, but all the German paperwork is present. The last German owner undertook lot of restoration work and only minor things and cosmetic work remains to be done. The bike is fitted with twin rubber saddles and a luggage rack. This model was never sold in the UK, although the majority of parts are common with UK models. I have many spares etc for the bike so ownership should not be a problem.~~