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# MISSING LINK

PART  
TWO

*Last month, Nolan Woodbury revealed a limited edition Le Mans V-twin, built for the German market at the end of the 1970s. This time he traces the evolution of the animal into the 1980s and lets it loose on an autobahn...*

*Photos by Nolan Woodbury*

**T**here is a reason why Moto Guzzi keeps choosing to refine its existing platform rather than developing a new one. Money, or the lack of it, might have played a part in Guzzi's decision making, but there's much to be gained from methodical practice. One glance at Guzzi's V-twin silhouette brings instant recognition; a form of function which can only be cultivated over time. That kind of brand-awareness can't be bought but must be earned through generations.

Yet as the 1980s progressed so did Mandello's spot in the market – in the wrong direction, trending down. To a growing segment of riders the traditional Moto Guzzi wasn't the answer. Others believed the right question had not been asked. Last time we revealed the special-edition V1000 Le Mans, engineered

by racer and tuner Duilio Agostini and which remains largely unknown. It's extremely rare but not entirely invisible, especially for those keen on Europe's endurance racing boom of the 1970s.

A quick historical review lists Charles Krajka, Stan Kapelowitz, Ted Stolarski and French importer Seudem among the fraternity of Guzzi endurance racers, so it's no surprise that each offered a 1000cc Le Mans before the factory finally took the plunge in 1984. Initially, most were built from Agostini's tuning catalogue. Contacting the factory to request a faster version, German import agent Motobecane (DMB) instead took sixty Agostini-built V1000s in 1980 which were based on the factory MkII 850 Le Mans.

But while the racers and tuning workshops were building big-bore Le Mans

machines, Moto Guzzi themselves weren't standing still. Motorcycles like Yamaha's TR1 twin may well have provided a shot of inspiration for European manufacturers – proof of an active market in the V-twin segment. With big research budgets, the Japanese companies explored water-cooling, V4s and plenty else; everything from futuristic rotaries to throwback singles.

Opting for evolution instead of revolution, Alessandro de Tomaso's new 850 Le Mans III was released in 1981 looking exactly the way he wanted; redrawn in the signature lines of De Tomaso's Modena studio. Underneath the new skin lived Lino Tonti's tested frame and a revised engine modified for larger bore diameters and squared-off castings. Despite this re-machining, Guzzi didn't seem interested in increasing the capacity of its flagship sports



bike, retaining the 850's bore and stroke of 83 by 78mm. Angular covers and plated exhausts capped the restyle, which was shipped worldwide for 1982.

The suspension components were also carried over from the 850 MkII, but higher quality control standards gave the cycle parts a more durable finish: a fitting match to an excellent engine. Equal in overall dimensions to the original Le Mans but far more modern, the 850 MkIII passed new

restrictions due to the work of Ing Umberto Todero, whose magic on the airbox and exhaust gained the needed certification without sacrificing power.

It still wasn't enough for DMB though, and demand from their client base resulted in an order for a hundred new V1000 Le Mans models, based on the MkIII, in Agostini tune. For those fortunate / wealthy enough to take delivery, a vividly different Guzzi experience was in store...



## RINGING THE CHANGES

### Italian-built Agostini for DMB V1000 Le Mans

There were some 44 individual changes between MkII and MkIII versions of the 850 Le Mans, many of which were carried over to the first batch of Agostini V1000 machines that were assembled in Italy. These included engine to frame venting, 180mm spaced yokes, air forks, a 20mm longer swinging arm and matching rear shocks. Inside, the cylinder studs were moved outwards by c3.5mm, leaving more meat for Agostini to apply his big bore upgrade.

'Over time, we began to have issues with the castings when fitting our largest valve packages,' recalls Agostini's daughter, Alis. 'The new material used for these cylinder heads was not as stable as before.' According to Ms Agostini, new options for the second-generation V1000, based on the Le Mans III, included a close-ratio transmission and a taller (8/33) pinion gear. Much of the work on the second-generation V1000 took place on her watch as day-to-day manager of the Agostini business, while founding father Duilio took a back seat.

As before, the focus of this Agostini V1000 wasn't just horsepower but engineered upgrades designed to boost comfort, style and high speed endurance. In effect, they built a super Le Mans. Agostini's upgrades to the MkIII closely followed the parameters established first time around. Uncrated bikes were shuttled from Guzzi's Lecco warehouse to Mandello, where each machine was stripped of its fairing, exhaust, cylinders and heads, all joining the seat and controls in the pile of new spares. Fully contoured and engineered to direct a cooling blast to the enclosed cylinders, the fairing and Agostini's new solo seat transformed the angular 850 III into a sleek, aerodynamic flyer which obviously owed much to its endurance roots.



Still recorded as 942cc, the plot begins with 88mm Nikasil cylinders and new pistons, but this time with slightly less compression at 10.1. Replacing the stock parts were heads modified with larger 46.5 and 40mm inlet and exhaust valves, stronger springs, and opened ports. Twin 40mm PHM Dell'Ortos attached via special manifolds, and 40mm headers were paired with upswept Lafranconi Competizione silencers. Driven from the crank, Agostini's alloy gears replaced the timing chain to connect Duilio's P3 cam and oil pump. Other items which could be customer specified included a vented sump, Marzocchi shocks and Agostini's popular rearset footrests.

This gave the new Agostini 1000 a potential 82bhp at 7500rpm and a timed top speed of 136mph. Other machines of the early 1980s boasted more output or faster quarter-mile acceleration, but for top speed only a handful of production motorcycles lived in the Agostini's neighbourhood.

Mainly published in Germany, adverts showing the flashy Italian appeared before shipments arrived. 'New!' proclaimed DMB's press release, and indeed it was, resplendent in bright white with black trim. 'The super bike for super demands,' reads the translation. 'The new 1000. A top performer among the "Formula I machines" to give the sporty driver what he seeks.'

Even more tuning components were available from Agostini's expanding catalogue, including more bodywork, a full racing camshaft, lightened flywheels and an available 992cc using 90mm pistons. Bold and expressive, Agostini's second generation V1000 offered a sharp uptick in both finish and flow, some being a general carryover of the improvements made by the factory. These days it's highly coveted by the Guzzisti, and still formidable over the road.

## COMPETITION AND COLLECTORS

### DMB assembled in Germany V1000 Le Mans

No doubt planned well before Agostini's flow of machines ended, by 1983 Motobecane GmbH in Germany had finalised details to build its own version of the litre Le Mans. Customer demand may have been stimulated by a recent win at Nürburgring, others insist the bike was the personal wish of Motobecane CEO Fritz Schaper, who longed to take Ducati's crown. Perhaps Schaper was motivated to better the performance of the already impressive Agostini machine, which in a published comparison against Japan's fastest machines tied with a modified Desmo 900SS for top speed bragging rights.

Official DMB documents list cylinders that were bored out 90mm, domed Mahle pistons, and an extremely aggressive '360' camshaft from Schrick. Given the claimed horsepower, there's some doubt regarding the listed valve diameters (44/37mm intake and exhaust, as per the stock 850 III), but the twin Dell'Orto PHMs stayed aboard. Rigged for top end superiority, the transmission was fitted with the long first gear, close-ratio shafts and an 8/33 pinion. Impressively, this meant the DMB bikes were rated at 95bhp which translated – winds permitting – to 145mph or more. Certification came through TUV exemptions for racing. 70 such machines were reported built, and more through kits.



DMB catalogue, 1985

For collectors, defining 'originality' on any of the special edition V1000 Le Mans variants can be challenging. Details change between owner-built specials and the Agostini and DMB advertised editions. DMB's full colour 1985 catalogue shows plenty of Agostini bits with German descriptions, but there's no mistaking DMB's V1000 for anything else. Totally restyled, that V1000 wore a slightly truncated twin-light fairing, a long, angular bottom enclosure and DMB rearsets. Retaining the factory seat and spoiler, more changes show Schajor headers, seamless Lafranconi exhausts and Koni 7610 shocks. With reports of blistering performance, the DMB V1000 Le Mans was again among the top sporting motorcycles available, approaching the charm of lofty exotics from Egli and Arturo Magni. Only one question remains; did DMB's V1000 Le Mans provide the final push towards a factory version?

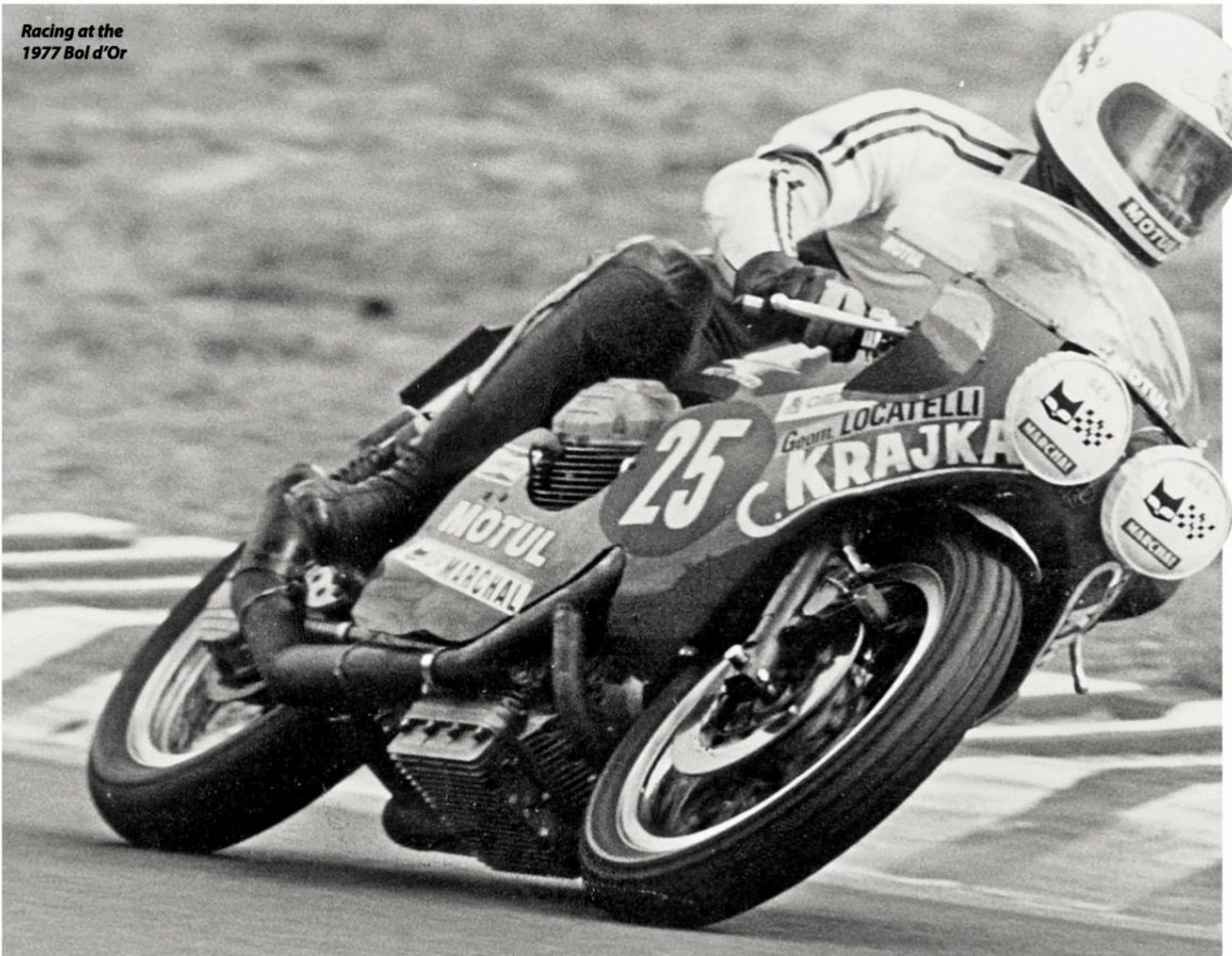


Engineering from the DMB catalogue



The 1985 DMB 1000

**Racing at the 1977 Bol d'Or**



**ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE**

**Charles Krajka in France and his V1000**

Meanwhile, Agostini was far from alone in producing a 1000cc Le Mans. A leading figure in Moto Guzzi racing through the 1970s and beyond, Charles Krajka reportedly kicked off his historic career with an Airone 250cc single. In 1968 the new 700cc V-twin went immediately into racing form for both solo and sidecar events. So popular was Krajka's Guzzi business that many in France believed he was the importer. An easy mistake, as it was Krajka who first brought the twin into France.

A welcome presence in Mandello, Krajka enjoyed close ties with lead engineer Lino Tonti and rumour says the factory often called the tuner for consultation. Seen as an innovator, a feisty competitor and responsible for much of the French moto culture, examples of Krajka's racing machines are displayed in the factory museum.

Adverts displaying Krajka's Le Mans claimed special modifications performed

to both 850 and 1000cc versions. Some machines wore Italian-made Stucchi fairings while others were styled with unidentified components. To make good on promises of superior performance,

the usual round of uprated components includes 40mm Dell'Orto PHM carbs, hints of cylinder head work, performance exhausts, options for gearing, seating, and Krajka's own rearset controls.

**charles krajka**

**MOTO GUZZI**

1. Carrozzeria ventrale, livreré dans les formes originie, avec protuberance ventrale. Soit le modèle pour le BOL D'OR pour les performances et/ou la commodité.  
 2. Echipamento "LA FRANCONI" cono gliconi de reglato, con 3 in fase TOUR DE FRANCE.  
 3. Componenti scelti gliconi et reglato, antipollini su SR50A - ripete patho passagio alligato.  
 4. Carter d'huile grande commercio, pour utilisation sportive ou militaire.  
 5. Rotazione de valvole, grande con braccia in top de chata, sotto le cambie de oro gliconi con le valvole.  
 6. Soit le mono, soit le jumbo, ambrava le confort de la passagio, avate avec en le plus, sempre sans maill.  
 7. Scatole de vitesse a chif.  
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**charles krajka**

**MOTO GUZZI**

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 Pour aller Tour Le Mans  
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 Carrozzeria origine  
 Echipamento sportive  
 Riseret a double ouverture

Soit mono  
 Soit avec commode ligne  
 Componente reglato  
 Double embrayage Tour Le Mans  
 Echipamento sportive pour transformation au 850 et 1000 cc

**MOTUL** 8, rue des laitieres 94300 VINCENNES - tél. 374.51.90  
 RM. 10030 84 78 94 - S.I.R.E.N. 788804311

## Seudem, the importer for France, and their V1000

Less is known about French importer Seudem, who promoted a win at the 1979 Bol d'Argent in adverts for its own 1000cc Le Mans. It appears very similar to the Agostini production bikes, but with plated exhausts and rear-sets sourced from Krajka. Seudem's 1979 racer was a

modified 850 Le Mans MkII, still wearing much of its factory bodywork. Other specials were dangled to gauge customer response by the import specialists, one of these being a prototype 850 Le Mans/SP. According to historian Mick Walker, Moto Guzzi only produced one before shelving the project.

### ON THE ROAD

#### Retrospective: Riding the V1000 II

At 130mph, the scenery between Frankfurt and Mainz blurs into walls of solid green. The engine's usual top-end clatter disappears into the howling wind, but when the rider ducks behind the screen it reappears to join the amplified blare of twin Lafranconis. Among the first items to depart in race prep, the Guzzi's heavy FPS wheels and chunky flywheel contribute to the roadbike's serenity, smoothing the ride at super-high speeds.

Made for this autobahn, the Agostini-DMB V1000 Le Mans is a fast, durable traveller that suffers little from the increased power provided by Agostini's upgrades to the standard 850 Le Mans. It's unfazed through the sweepers and the decades. More than adequate, Agostini's all-enclosing fairing dominates the styling and the rider's view, but it's never too much to look over or around. Three iron Brembos pull things down nicely when the sudden urge for coffee strikes.

'I didn't care for it much at first,' admits owner Carsten Tegeler. 'There was an adjustment process. I was told the Le Mans would take practice and it's true. You don't change it, it changes you.'

Sold new as a DMB V1000 Le Mans at the Bielefeld dealership, three previous owners had a turn before Carsten spotted this machine in the small ads c1986. 'A dual seat and Koni shocks were fitted, but it otherwise seemed original,' recalls Carsten, who refitted the solo seat. 'At one point it was sent to Alfred Bajohr, a famous Ducati and Guzzi tuner in Germany, so that explains the dual-plug heads and two-lead coils. It also came with a 38mm exhaust, but I never put it on.'

Sparking interest in fast Moto Guzzis with impressive race wins, Bajohr is credited as a key figure behind DMB's decision to commission the 1000cc Le Mans. 'The larger engine does make more horsepower than a normal Le Mans II or III... even more than a

### NOUVEAUTÉS Deux nouvelles Guzzi-Seudem



D'origine, le haut de gamme Moto Guzzi est déjà très standardisé. Une sorte de Mécano avec une partie cycle unique, un même moteur en plusieurs versions et plusieurs boîtes (4,5 vitesses ou automatique) et des habillages de style différent.

En fonction des demandes de notre marché, l'importateur français, le Seudem (7, boulevard Ney, 75018 Paris), a lui aussi fait ses petits mélanges et présente ainsi deux nouveaux modèles.

La 1 000 Le Mans 2 est une continuation de la 1 000 Le Mans vendue depuis plus d'un an avec cette fois le

La 850 Le Mans/SP qui devrait associer la punch du moteur Le Mans à la protection du carénage de la SP. Vitesse annoncée 200 km/h.

carénage sport en deux parties de la 850 Le Mans 2, version classique et normale de l'usine italienne.

La 850 Le Mans 2/SP, comme son nom l'indique est une 1 000 SP munie du grand carénage et dans laquelle a été monté le moteur plus sportif de la 850 Le Mans.

Ces deux nouveaux mélanges valent respectivement 20 500 F TTC pour la 1 000 Le Mans 2 et 25 900 F TTC pour la 850 Le Mans 2/SP.



standard 1000 IV, as long ago we tested it at a sprint contest.'

Previously on a 500cc Monza but dreaming of a Le Mans, Carsten's first impression was that the smaller Guzzi fit his riding better, but some friends with experience gave advice. 'I was told to be patient, and was asked to drive the Le Mans for a year, just to learn its behaviour. After that, if I still felt it was the wrong choice then I should sell. Good advice! I'm glad I listened.'

His long period of ownership has given Carsten a few preferences, like ditching the popular OEM Pirelli Phantoms for Metzlers. 'The Pirelli is fine for sunny days but the Metzler is good rain or shine, so another great suggestion from my Le Mans friends. I can't say enough good things about the ME33/99 combination.

'Unlike some, I believe the linked brake system is a wonderful invention. Great for braking in corners. Then again, I've hardly used "normal" brakes. Back when the Japanese were making more and more horsepower I accepted when they overtook me on straight roads, but the Le Mans maintains a greater amount of poise when the unexpected happens.'



Thanks to V1000 owner Carsten Tegeler, Friedrich Holtkämper and Bielefeld Guzzi dealer Jochen Hökenschniederall, who all provided key info on the second-generation V1000s



With decades of good memories it might be difficult to choose, but the Agostini name inscribed on the V1000's tank gives a hint to Carsten's most memorable moment.

'In 1988 I planned a trip to Mandello and during my visit the bike caught fire. Gasoline and a running spark plug is not a good relationship! So I take it to the Agostini garage and in about ten days his mechanic rebuilds it perfectly. I have a chance to meet the man who built my bike, so I asked him to sign the tank. Pleased and flattered I'd come so far, Duilio Agostini explained that sixty bikes had been built on the MkII base and a hundred more on the MkIII. All for the German market.

'I was the first owner to take his bike back to Agostini. Two years later some painting had to be done due to me slipping in a corner, and the name disappeared. That summer I visited Duilio again and asked for a new signature; this time on both sides.'

The most fortunate among us might own such a rarefied, special edition motorcycle. Few will have the chance to meet the engineers who created it or the people who built the business that delivered it to customers across Europe and – eventually – worldwide. No wonder Carsten's relationship with his V1000 is something special.



'Duilio's daughters Lindy and Alis were so friendly and helpful. Truly gracious and kind. I present this story to honour a great man, Duilio Agostini, and his wonderful family!' **Rc**

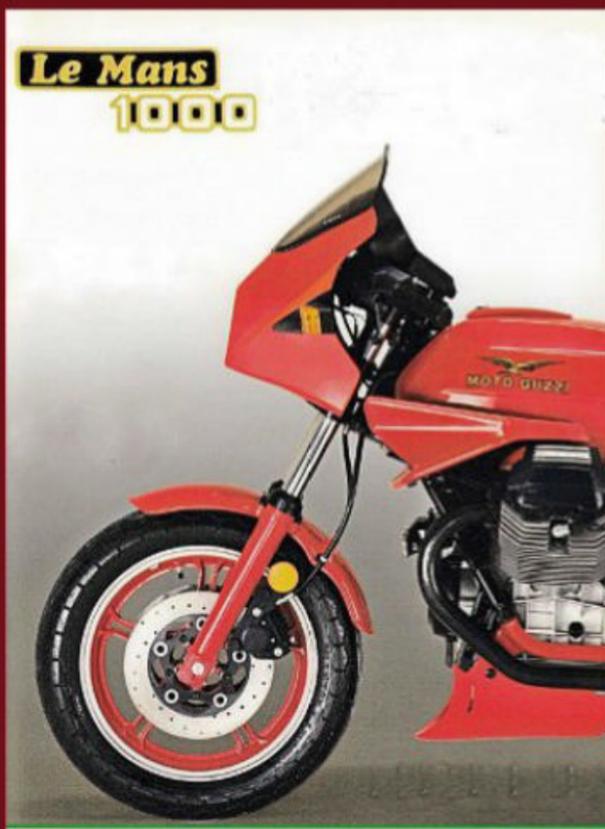


## Finally, The Factory 1000

Introduced in November 1984, the 949cc Le Mans emerged as a factory model nearly five years after Agostini's initial V1000. Restyled as a tribute to Guzzi's Bol d'Or race heritage, the Le Mans boasted a taller, reinforced headstock, 180mm yokes, 40mm forks and a 16" front wheel. Taking some criticism, the model has proved to be built around a stable, willing powerhouse which took a hard-earned championship courtesy of US dentist John Wittner.

Not surprisingly, the engine's technical specifications mirror that which Duilio and his team developed, using 47/40mm intake and exhaust valves and 40mm Dell'Orto PHM carbs fixed to Toderò's reworked airbox. Domed 10.1 pistons and a performance ignition advance worked in conjunction with the factory's B10 performance camshaft to develop a claimed 81bhp at 7000rpm. 'Eventually, some of our development work was shared with the factory, but not all of it,' says Alis Agostini. Properly run in, the factory issue Le Mans is capable of clearing 140mph.

To commemorate twenty years of big twin production, Guzzi released the



1000 Le Mans SE in 1987. Identified by slash graphics, some had a black-painted driveline with a unique close-ratio gearbox that was even taller and widely spaced. In this specification, the factory Le Mans moves very close to the litre-specials which preceded it, and collectors are starting to pay attention. In Germany, DMB continued its tuning program after the factory 1000 was released.

