

# DESMO LEANINGS



The Official Magazine of the Ducati Owners Club of the United States

Volume 2 Issue 3

Fall 2004

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- **KEY WEST ROAD TRIP**
- **ROEBLING CRASH**
- **MEET THE MEMBER: BOB HANCOCK**



# DARMAH DRAMAS



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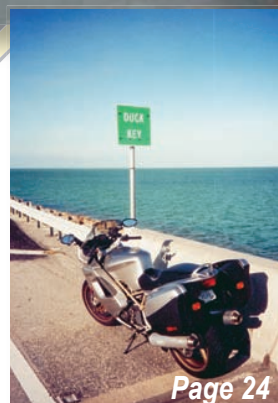
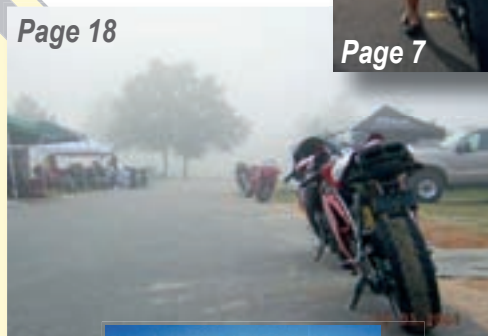
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Jim Lipsey and Craig Hunley argue over who has the most D-lectable Darmah (See article and photos starting on page 13)



Digital Photography by Jim Calandro




# Greetings from il Capo

The leaves are changing, and it is that time again for our fall issue of our magazine. We have contracted with the printer of Desmo Leanings to do more of the layout work, which will allow us the time to continue providing 32-page issues. This is a real step in the development of our magazine, but it means we need more articles. So if you have something you would like to see published, do not hesitate to send it in.

It is time to start planning events for next year, so if you have a good idea, do not keep it a secret. We can only grow the club and events if you are willing to share ideas and assistance. John Rossi, our Northeast representative, has done this with both a rally and now the lecture at the Larz Anderson Auto Museum by Pierre Terblanche. We will have coverage of this event in our winter issue.

Our fall cover features a classic bevel-drive Darmah. They were quite a departure from the classic Ducati look of their day. I guess you could say they were the ST4 of the 70s. Craig Hunley and Jim Lipsey are the proud owners, and Craig shares the story of his search for this bike. If you have an unusual Ducati or an interesting story, please contact us so we can try and use them. Remember, we want pictures with artistic qualities and high resolution. A nice story about the bike in the shots will make it all that more interesting to our readers.

The club has just issued member number 486! Not bad for less than two years! If you are enjoying the club and the events, please tell your friends about us so we can continue to grow.

Our magazine is sent out to forty dealers on the east coast. If you are in a dealership and do not see our magazine on its shelf, ask them if they know about it. If they do not, then drop me a note and I will add them to our mailing list for current copies of the newsletter. It always pays to advertise, and I think our magazine says volumes about us. We will be working on the winter issue, and it should be out during the holiday season. So if you have something to be included in that issue, do not wait. 



Jim  
il Capo



Jim Calandro .....il Capo  
Clyde Romero.....Consigliere  
Bob Lattanzi .....Consigliere  
Terry Wyse .....Consigliere  
David Grogan ..... Proof Reader  
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# Piazza del Mercato

## **2002 Ducati 748R #954**

2 miles New out of box in June 2004. Never started. Perfect Condition. \$19,900. Photos available upon request.

**Bryson Stephens**

**bryson@bogartsmotorsports.com**  
**205-956-6693**

## **Titanium slip-on exhausts**

for a Ducati 996/916/748 ('94 to '02 models) from Fast By Ferracci (FBF catalog number F33500T). Includes Carbon/Kevlar fiber ankle heat shield. Has Ferracci's oval Italian flag logo. Bracket hardware also included. These pipes are beautiful and in perfect condition. They have only been used for 1000 dry miles. Reason for sale: need the money.

Asking \$690 for everything.

**Gary Meyering**

**eurobritbiker@yahoo.com**  
**(703) 704-1617**

## **1999 Ducati 748S track bike**

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**Bill Birchfield**

**bill@qppionline.com**  
**(704) 617-1835**

## **1975 Laverda SF2**

Dressed to look like the legendary SFC. Fairing, seat, rear sets, clip-ons and of course bright orange paint. Borrani rims, twin front disc and Laverda dual leading shoe rear brake. Bike is in good shape and is a daily rider.

**Jim Calandro**

**capo@carolina.rr.com**  
**(704) 843-0429**

## **1996 Ducati Supersport 900 SS/SP**

Bike is set up like a Superlight with solo Corbin seat. Stock seat also included. This is the nicest Supersport SP you will find. 18K miles, dealer maintained. Never down, never raced. D&D carbon fiber mufflers, upswept, sounds GREAT! Jet kit, K&N, Hyperlights, bar end mirrors, steel braided brake and clutch lines. Steering damper, carbon fiber instrument panel cover. Dealer just completed major service including cam belts and new chain. Ready to GO! A great deal at \$5,300

Pictures can be seen at:

<http://www.msusers.com/DucatiSupersport/shoebox.msnw?Page=1>

**Joe in Davidson, NC**

**704-892-4668**

**HutchJ2003@aol.com**

# Piazza del Mercato

## 1991 Ducati 851 SP3 #216

6 miles New out of box in June 2004. Never started. Perfect Condition. \$25,000. Photos available upon request.

**Bryson Stephens**  
**bryson@bogartsmotorsports.com**  
**205-956-6693**

## 1977 Moto Guzzi 850 Le Mans I "The Hoffman"

This bike was purchased new by John Hoffman of Cycle Specialties and used as his personal bike until he moved to the Philippines. It is white and has 47,000 miles on the odo. Modifications include: Corbin seat, 40mm Dellortos, performance kit cam, close ratio gearbox, Ohlins shocks, stainless steel exhaust, and disintegrated brakes. \$6500.

**Craig Hunley, Charlotte, NC**  
**cchunley@bellsouth.net**  
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## 2002 Moto Guzzi Lemans 1100

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# DUCATI PAINTS VIRGINIA

October 9th & 10th, 2004

# Red

The setting was scenic VIRginia International Raceway in Alton, Virginia, the site of the final day of races in the AMA Chevrolet Superbike Championships. The weather was perfect! Sunny skies and mid 70s both Saturday and Sunday. Ducati had decided to fly riders Regis Laconi and Lorenzo Lanzi from World Superbike competition over to assist Ducati Austin rider Eric Bostrom, who has been suffering from injuries sustained at Road Atlanta. EBoz was going to make an attempt to ride this weekend. The race was set up to be a fun-filled Ducati fest. With three world-class riders on the grid, the Italian manufacturer had an excellent chance of a podium finish.



US Desmo member Tom Horner wears the colors proud.

This was an event I would not miss. VIR is one of the most scenic race tracks in the country and attracts thousands of fans from all over. For those of you who have done a track day here, you know the language that I am speaking. Ducatisti came from Canada, Chicago, Florida, New York, and dozens of other areas, with all descending on this beautiful facility. US Desmo and fellow Ducati owners were welcomed at the Ducati hospitality area in Turn 4 for refreshments, food, and celebration of their passion. Free t-shirts and kickstand pads along with VIP parking were available for all Ducati owners.

Saturday started with autograph signings from Eric, Regis, and Lorenzo. Sunday brought an autograph session from HMC Ducati Milwaukee rider Chris Chandler before his Formula Extreme race, in which he took a third place finish. The fans lined up almost fifty yards deep to see these fast and furious riders. Eric stayed way beyond the scheduled autograph session to accommodate his fans. He is such a fan favorite and affable guy. He even came back on Sunday and spent an hour signing more autographs and posing for pictures.

It was a star-studded weekend as Michael Jordan made a rare appearance; well, his Ducati 998 did. All trimmed in chrome with the famous jumpman logo, it was an eye catcher and photo stop in the pits. Gary Eagan even spent some time off his Ducati Multistrada to hang with the fans and consume potato chips in the hospitality area. You may know Gary as the man who broke the Guinness world record for riding his motorcycle from the farthest-north tip of Alaska to the southern-most tip of the Florida Keys in a record 101 hours. And he did it on only 6 hours of sleep!!! And of course on a Ducati!

To all our regret, Eric Bostrom had to withdraw from the race as the injuries were inhibiting his ability to ride aggressively. Eric told US Desmo he just did not have the strength to throw the Ducati 999 around the track and be competitive.

Thank you to Vicki Smith and Ducati for putting on such a wonderful display. Their hospitality was second to none at the track. If you have a chance to attend any races next year, please make sure to stop by the tent and enjoy the effort made by the staff and volunteers. 'Til next time.

Caio,  
Tom Truskolaski



Eric and Tom laughing at the advice Tom Truskolaski gave him to be a little faster.



Stan Simmerson, Jim Blackwell and US Desmo Member Tom Truskolaski scanning Desmo Leanings.



Regis Laconi and US Desmo member Tom Truskolaski bonding.



Doug Chandler submerged in Desmo Leanings.

TRIBUTE TO...

# JIM MEYERS

I used to see myself as a BMW rider, which is a point I got to after owning several Japanese bikes. One day at our normal Sunday morning breakfast meeting place, a 1980s Ducati 750 F1 sat in the parking lot. It looked so cool with the perimeter frame encircling the gas tank, and I remembered the 750 Ducatis of the early 70s and the one a friend let me ride. The Moto Guzzi V50 my wife and I also owned had taught me a little about what Italian “character” was all about, and suddenly I knew I must own a Ducati.

There was a small shop in our town, called Myers Sports Car Service. At the time, they were also a new Ducati motorcycle franchise, and I went to check the new bikes out. In an older, industrial part of town sat a small gray, wooden house with shingle siding. The parking area consisted of some potholes and uneven gravel. I walked up on the porch, pushed open the creaky old door, and was greeted by the warm smile of the proprietor, Jim Myers. On the floor sat the new 1992 851 four-valve Ducati that had been so successful in racing. Also sitting there were 900 Super Sports in both the CR and SP versions. The Super Sport bikes had an almost mythical appeal to me, so those are what I focused on. Jim spent the better part of the afternoon talking motorcycles, cars, and other things with me. He explained the ins and outs of the SP’s advantages over the CR, with the carbon fiber parts, cast iron rotors, aluminum swing arm, etc. I remember leaving that shop thinking: I can’t go back there; I am buying a new house, my ten year old and five year old children need clothing, and I will not be able to resist the bikes in combination with such a warm hearted, nice guy like Jim laying on his smooth southern “soft sell”. I broke my pact with myself from time to time, walking in the shop, mostly to talk bikes with Jim. I put my BMWs up for sale. At some point I took all my close friends into the shop just to meet Jim and to help me drool on the Italian exotics.

Damn, that guy and that shop had character. Jim and his shop had what was disappearing in the motorcycle world and was being replaced by motorcycle “superstores” with their trained salesmen that used the same techniques of the average car dealer. The passion was alive and well at Myers Sports Car Service. Jim and his small shop brought back so many memories of my youth and some of the small dirt bike shops I hung out at, and I realized that those were the qualities that made motorcycling what it was for me.

It was almost eight years later, when I purchased my first Ducati, a 1999 750 Super Sport, that I found how profoundly sincere Jim really was. We talked for more than two hours in his already closed for business shop. This was more than just buying a bike.

Over the years, I watched the shop grow. New employees came, with all of them adding to the shop’s theme and being characters in their own right. One time when Jim and his sister, Diane, were away from the shop on a trip to Italy, I watched them haul away truck loads of old car parts and other of Jim’s treasures, all of it to the dump. I could relate to this, as I too am a pack rat.

On Monday, August 23rd, Jim was at the shop but not feeling well, and he asked Sam to take him to the hospital. Jim passed away from heart complications at the age of 58. I, along with many others, lost a friend that day, and motorcycling lost one of its own.

Rick Tannenbaum  
Asheville, NC





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## MEET THE MEMBER: *Bob Hancock*

I think my fascination with motorcycles started with my first contact as a 10 year old who sat on a neighbor's Harley dresser. This was around the mid-fifties, and it was most likely a 74 c.i. hardtail. I remember it as having a big seat with tassels, a wide handlebar, and it was big. When I sat on it, my feet didn't touch the floor boards. But when the owner started it, the marvelous sound said power and speed. I wanted one.



Skip to my sophomore year in college (1966), when a friend brought by a Norton Atlas 750. He gave me a ride, and I couldn't think about anything else. Letters were sent home with pleas for a bike, complete with drawings. I borrowed a buddy's Puch, and I would swap my car for my roommate's 305 Honda scrambler. I finally ended up selling my car and buying a 1967 BSA Thunderbolt: 650cc, single monoblock Amal carb, raised handlebars, and British Racing Green with chrome on the sides of the tank. I was hooked. Of course, I still lusted for other machines, particularly the Harley XLCH and the most lustworthy of all motorcycles, a Triumph Bonneville. Wrenching for a friend who owned two Norton P-11As, I got one as a parting gift when I graduated from college (class of '68). I then joined the Air Force, selling both bikes as I left.

*continued on page 12*



Bob, it's not your BSA, you don't have to push-start it



You're lookin' a little flat, you coulda' had a V-2!



My living room isn't this neat!

# MEET THE MEMBER: BOB HANCOCK



Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, circa 1967  
(note get-away Huffy in background)



"As soon as Dennis Hopper shows up, we're RIDIN' !"





We don't need to stinkin' Kryptonite lock...we've got Chester!



Get your Ducs in a row



"Born to be Mild"



Yea but do I LOOK fast?



While living in Thailand where I was flying the F-4, I had \$1,000 of mad money before returning home. Two options: a custom made teak roll-top desk or an XLCH with stateside delivery to Mobil, Alabama. No contest—I got the Harley. Then I got another Harley. Then the Air Force moved me to Bitburg, Germany. I left the Harley in my parents' basement and bought a new BMW R90/6. This bike made many trips all over Europe, including Zaragoza, Spain. My first trip was an epic ride in which I left Germany at 0700 in the morning. I had three days to get to Spain, but I didn't want to get off the bike, so I ended up on the beach at Sitges, Spain, on the Mediterranean at 1500 the next day. 32 hours with stops for gas, food, and drink--something only a young man could/would do.

Two years later I traded the bike in on a new 1977 R100RS. It was silver with a solo seat and blue pin stripes on the bodywork and wheels. It was aerodynamic like nothing else in the world. I left Germany with this bike, riding it to Frankfurt, putting it on a 747, and meeting it at Dulles. The land of 55 mph did not impress me, so I traded both bikes for a Mercedes 240D. There was a long hiatus with no bikes due to career, family, career, more career.

I retired January 1, 1996. Without thinking about it, bike lust came from behind, and soon I had an almost-new 1995 FXDWG Big Twin Harley. I rode this until a guy ran away from me on the Blue Ridge Parkway on his BMW R1100RT. Since I thought I was a better rider, I needed to remedy this, and I traded the Harley for a BMW R1100RT. Lots of miles, and then came a 1999 BMW R1100S.

OK, where are the Ducks? I had heard of Carl Fogarty and his 916, but this was racing in a far land with no relationship to me in Georgia, or so I thought. I didn't know the difference between a bevel and a belt drive, and I didn't really know what the desmo deal was, but it was interesting to hear what I could. Within the BMW community, Dr. Curve has written some thrilling, personal, from-the-heart missives of riding to the limits with a friend, Doug, who was also known as the Macon Ace. The Macon Ace rode a Ducati and spent most of his time running away from a well-ridden R1100S with Dr. Curve aboard while running the Blue Ridge 500.

Being from middle Georgia, I ran into Doug locally and was most interested in his Ducati, a 907ie. It was love at first sight (hearing), and I knew I'd have to have one. As with the Harley, it was the sound of the Duck that got me. There is nothing else like it. I liked the cadence and the rattle. When the ST4 came out, I had to have one. Then I got a 996, followed by an RC-51. The RC was a fine bike, but it just didn't have heart. We gearheads enjoy talking the mechanics of machines, and Ducks can stand their ground in this area easily, especially when you bring racing into the discussion. But what makes a Duck special to me are the intangibles--the way it rides and sounds and looks--all things of the heart that can't be readily explained. It is kind of like one girl is prettier than the other. But who is to say? When you spend so much time sitting at speed in the wind, you want something that has the capacity to make you happy for those hours. A Duck will do it.

So, the RC-51 went, and now I have a '95 916 and a '00 ST4, and I still keep thinking about that 907. Hmmm.





# DARMAH DRAMAS

## PART I: THE ACQUISITION

BY CRAIG HUNLEY



**I**t had been nine years. Nine years since I had cranked the bike and even longer since I had ridden it. Robbie's Honda had sat in my mother's garage for nine years since I had moved it out of the weather. To say it had been forgotten was an understatement. Now I had time on my hands after liberating myself from the corporate world, and I needed something to do. Why not see if Robbie's bike would run? And if it runs, what then? Do I keep it or go get something I had always wanted, such as a bevel-drive Ducati? You know, a "poser bike" that would be ridden maybe once a month. My dream bike would be a schoolbus-yellow 750 Ducati Sport, but one of the pretty bevel-drive singles would do nicely.

Robbie's Honda, a blue 1975 CB400 F, had sat in one spot for so long the brake pads had adhered to the disc. Once I got the bike moved to my garage, it was not too big of a deal to clean it up, replenish the fluids, and fire it up. I remember feeling very proud that my limited mechanical skills had brought the bike back to life. Now what to do with it?

My buddy Robbie had hotrodded the Honda with the intention of building a pocket rocket that would embarrass my RD 400. He ordered parts from Yoshima and Yoshimura to rebuild the top end. The pretty little Honda sported an oversized piston kit, bored carbs, hot cam, new rods, and new exhaust system. Koni shocks, air-adjustable forks, and K-81 Dunlops completed the package. It was a nice setup in its day. The engine was indeed strong, but the bike lacked the brakes to match its power. Additionally, the bored carbs had no chokes. The easiest way to enrich the carbs was to take a syringe and inject gas through the K&Ns into the intake tract. All in all, it just was not a practical package for the street. The bike's highest and best usage was probably for vintage racing, but I was certain racing was not in my future, so what to do with it now?

*Continued on Page 16*





# Darmah







*Dreams*

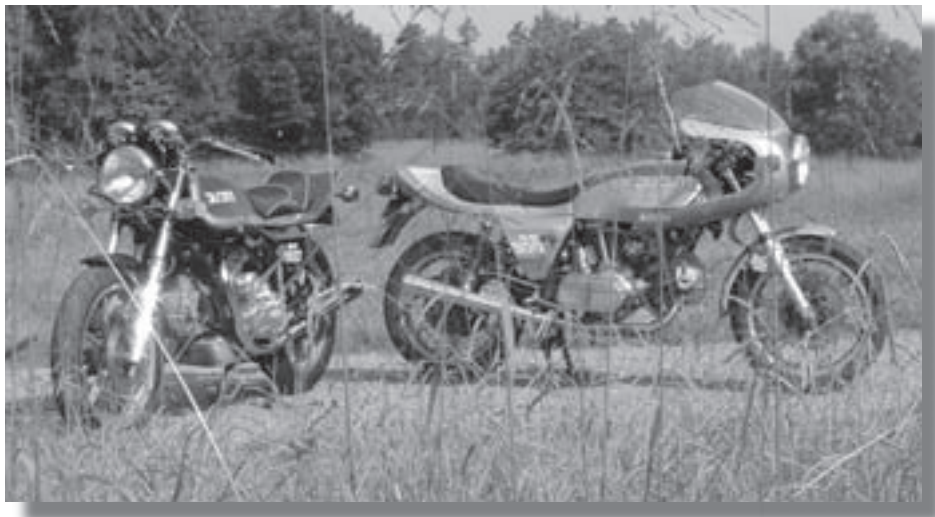


Robbie had lost interest in the bike after building it. For him, the journey was more rewarding than the destination. He had gotten interested in sailboats. I had owned an old sailboat, which I had lost interest in. A swap was made. Shortly thereafter, Robbie died suddenly. Not long after that, I crashed the Honda and had my first “orthopedic experience.” After healing, I repaired the Honda and went for a few rides, but my confidence was shot. I slowly lost interest in bikes and did not ride for a dozen years. Still, I held on to Robbie’s bike out of sentimental attachment.

The Honda made my decision for me. Once back on the road, it leaked oil like a sieve. The decision “what to do with it” was made. I would sell the Honda and go look for an old bevel-drive Ducati to ride only on sunny Sunday afternoons. Having been out of the motorcycle community for a dozen years, I did not know where to start looking for an old Ducati. Somewhere I picked up a copy of Mick Walker’s Ducati Buyer’s Guide. Meanwhile, I started scanning the local paper’s ads and searched Hemmings Motor News as well. It now seems like a stupid place to look for a motorcycle, but at the time Hemmings and a few antique bike magazines were the only places I knew to look. It became evident from a few ads that a bevel-drive 750 Sport was going to be more money than I was willing to pay. In the meantime, an ad popped up in the local paper for a 1978 Ducati 900SD priced at \$5,000. “Like new, one adult owner,” it said. A month later the advertised price was \$4,900. Two months later the price was \$4,500.

Walker’s Ducati Buyer’s Guide described 900SDs (Darmahs) as nice but unexciting bikes. Darmahs were the civilized Ducati with electric start and a comfortable seating position. They provided reliable service but were overshadowed by the 900SSs that Ducati sold during the same period. Walker did not think Darmahs had much appreciation potential.

Essentially too many Darmahs had been made, and they just did not have the sex appeal of some other models. Surely Mr. Walker knew what he was talking about; he did write a book on the subject. Personally, all I remembered about Darmahs was a red one gracing the cover of Cycle World when they first came out. That Darmah’s look always appealed to me, and the magazine’s article had been complimentary as well.



I kept looking for a cheap 750 Sport with no luck. After a couple of months, the Darmah was advertised again for \$5,000 with a different phone number listed. By then I was dying to own an old Ducati, so I called to check it out. It seems the original owner had sold the bike to a speculator who was now offering it for resale. The Darmah sounded so nice. The original owner had “built” the motor and added a full fairing with clip-on handlebars. The paint was original, and the bike had never been down. I had to check it out.

In black and gold with an MHR-style fairing, it was a pretty bike. Very clean, and the paint was in great condition. The Darmah cranked easily and seemed to run fine. Jeez, I had missed my chance to get it cheap, but the hook was set. I had wanted a Ducati since college days and by golly, now I was going to get one.



It was tough to be prudent and take the time to learn something more about Darmahs. I have always been a sucker for a pretty face, and the bike looked so good! Patience is not in my character, but I did make a few inquiries looking for knowledge. At that time, there was no Ducati dealer in my hometown of Charlotte. However, there was a dealer in Asheville. I called Jim Meyers in Asheville, and he said, "There are two kinds of Ducati dealers. There are dealers that focus on new bikes, and there are dealers that will work on the old ones. We focus on the new ones. The only dealer around that works on the old ones is John Hoffman at Cycle Specialties in Athens, Georgia. You should call Hoffman."

So I called John Hoffman in Athens. John was very free with his time and answered all my stupid questions during several phone conversations. He suggested a price range for the bike and said changing the oil every 1,000 miles was the key to long engine life.



John did not like the fact that the engine had been modified, but he thought Darmahs in general were reliable. He knew one fellow that had ridden a Darmah from Oregon to the east coast. John even addressed my concerns about the bike's serial numbers. The engine and frame numbers did not match, although Walker's book indicated they should. John's response was, "Walker didn't know what the f#%k he was talking about." One learned quickly not to argue with John Hoffman.

I also spoke with the original owner of the Darmah, who talked at length about all he had done to improve the bike. He had switched to 40mm Dell'Orto carbs, an Imola cam, bigger valves, and a custom-made exhaust system. Additionally, he bored the cylinders to accept oversized, high-compression pistons and ported the heads. According to the original owner, the bike was as fast as a bevel-drive 900SS. It sounded really special, and nothing I heard talked me out of buying the bike. It was going to be mine, so I called the seller and struck a deal that allowed him to make a few hundred bucks on a bike he had owned only a couple of months. It was late August of 1995 when the Darmah came to live with me.

In my former motorcycle life, one of my best riding buddies was George Smith. At one time he had owned a Ducati 860 GT. Like me, George had lost interest in motorcycles, but he had developed a passionate interest in bicycling. I wanted to show George my new toy. So the

day after buying the Darmah I rode over to visit George at his bicycle shop. We set on the curb in front of his shop for close to an hour looking at the Darmah and remembering old times. George said, "Remember Jim Calandro? He's moved back to this area, and he has a number of Ducatis. You should call him." I remembered the name, but barely remembered Jim as we had met only briefly. George found Jim's phone number for me before I left. Then I proceeded to take the long way home, enjoying some of the country roads I used to ride a dozen years earlier. Upon reaching my

home and going inside, the phone was ringing. I answered it, and the caller identified himself as Jim Calandro.....



# CMP Track Day



Is this what they meant by FOGGY replica?



Remember to drink lots of water!



I may be old but I'm not slow!



After our last rally of the year had to be cancelled due to Hurricane Ivan, we were worried about our last event, our autumn track day. It was a little overcast and had us worried, but the weather all worked out for the best. The day was a perfect day to wear leathers and get out on the track: warm enough to heat up the tires but not so warm as to overheat the riders.

The event had 90 riders signed up, which is our maximum. Registration and tech inspection went smoothly, and we held our riders' meeting right on time at 8:30 a.m. We had several people not show up, which is a shame as the event had a waiting list. With 30 riders in each group, we

are not crowded, and this is what we like to see as it keeps the track wide open and safe.

By the afternoon, the track was nice and warm and riders were feeling more confident. Although this meant they were having more fun, it also meant there was more speed and daring, and the thing our club has avoided for so many years finally happened. Mike Morley, a long-time track day participant and friend, had a bad get-off. He was medevaced by helicopter to the Palmetto Richland Memorial Hospital in Columbia in very serious condition. He was in a chemically induced coma for over two weeks, but as of the end of October he had awakened and was making a recovery.





Andrè the GIANT?



The Monster mash!



*By the afternoon, the track was nice and warm and riders were feeling more confident.*



Hey! It's a transvestite V!



Gentlemen, start your engines!

An incident like this brings home what we all know, which is that we participate in a very dangerous hobby. We all love the excitement and know of the dangers, but we sometimes tend to keep the danger part in our subconscious. This incident forces us to look at it full on. No activity can promise total safety, but we try to keep our track days as safe as we know how. If there were no element of danger, it would not be half the fun it is. We just have to keep the balance. If anyone has a suggestion for our track days, the club, as has always been our policy, is open to suggestions to improve any event we run.

Keep Mike in your prayers for a full and speedy recovery. His family is going through an emotional and financial hardship, so prayers and donations will be greatly appreciated. If you would like to make a donation, a good friend of the family is collecting checks and depositing them to Kelly Morley's account so she can cover bills as they come up.

To make a donation, make your check payable to Kelly Morley and mail it to:

Enisha & Cliff Everett  
1214 Pony Farm Rd.  
Jacksonville, NC 28540



# IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME....

I have had the Ducati bug for about ten years now. I think it may be a sub-set of the European bug that first manifested itself in the impulse purchase of a Triumph Bonneville back in 1975, but that is another story. This one relates to my first track-day crash – something I always knew was possible, even probable, but until recently I had been able to avoid.

I have been doing track days for a few years now. Some former WERA racers here in Jacksonville, Florida, led by Julian Poczatek (who later built the Jennings, Florida, track) started up a group that raced vintage bikes out at an old Navy airfield on weekends. We would set up cones on the runway and do timed laps just for fun. The Corvette club would be down at the other end, doing the same thing and smoking their tires like crazy. I had an old Ducati 750GT that I had cleaned up and was a lot of fun, but the format was somewhat limiting. I had met Tony Foster from PCS Daytona, and he was running occasional track days around the Southeast. I finally worked up the courage to try one of his weekends. I accumulated all the requisite equipment, rented a trailer, and headed up to Roebing Road Raceway near Savannah for the weekend. The first day was cool and wet, and I scared the hell out myself on my street tires. But the second day was perfect, and by the end of the weekend I was having more fun than should be legal. I was hooked.

Of course, before long I needed more horsepower, as my old GT could keep up with the middle group in the curves, but I almost got blown off the track on the straight. My unfaired 110 mph (maybe

maximum was no match for the R1s and 916s blowing by at 140+! I got lucky and found a very clean, high-mileage 1993 900SS with all the right mods, and it even came with a trailer and extra fairing panels. I was SOMEBODY now! I had met Jim Calandro at one of his rallies at Two Wheels Only campground in northern Georgia, and he was now putting on track days also, so I have since done a couple with his Club Desmo group. Needless to say, it was a whole new world with a reasonably capable bike. I still can't keep up with the latest bikes out there, but I have more than enough power to test my 51-year-old nerves.

My mishap occurred at Roebing this past spring. I had signed up late and did not get in the middle group, so I was riding with the fast guys. As it turned out, it was not a problem. Having done several track days, I knew enough to start each session easy, and I was basically holding my own. The really fast guys would always get by easily, but I was able to get into a pretty good rhythm and was feeling pretty good about my riding. The biggest thing was that I was really getting confident about my control of the bike, that I had a good handle on just how much I could push it. About halfway through the second session in the afternoon, as I was leaning over in turn four, just like I had the last few times, all of a sudden I was going sideways. It was a very strange sensation – sort of “What’s this? – Damn, I’m crashing!” Luckily, there is plenty of run-off, and the bike slid across the track very calmly until it hit the grass, then caught and flipped at least twice. I slid behind it on my back, also ending up on the outside of the turn in the grass. No drama, just a ton of dust and dirt flying everywhere. Fortunately, there was no one else involved, although another rider did crash at almost the exact same time about a hundred yards behind me in turn two. I remembered not to stick out an arm or leg until I stopped sliding, then jumped up and ran over to my bike. It was immediately



apparent that my day was over. I signaled to the corner worker that I was OK, then realized that I had better get back from the track, as I did not know whether they would stop the session or let it run until the end. With two bikes down, they red-flagged it, and soon I was helping roll my bike onto the rescue trailer, and then we picked up the other rider. We were both OK, but both bikes were at least superficially pretty messed up.

Since my routine was now totally trashed, it was strange to go about the process of assessing the damage and cleaning up the bike, loading it on the trailer, and packing up my gear. Looking back, I realize I was probably in a mild state of shock over the whole thing and just operating in a daze. That was the first of several lessons learned in retrospect. Several people stopped to check if I was OK, which was nice. One of them worked for Troy Gwin, of MotoPhotos. They had been out in one of the corners taking photos, and he said he thought that Troy had caught most of my wipe-out. As it turned out, he had caught the initial slide, as well as several shots of the bike tumbling, and then me investigating the results. I got in touch with him and purchased a disc of the whole sequence, which revealed several things, resulting in several more lessons learned.

Depending on the track and local restrictions, Troy sets up for pictures at several different spots during the day. In each spot he catches each rider (or group) as they come around each time, so at the end of the day he may have 50 shots of you, with, for example, ten in each of five different corners. In my case, there were multiple shots of me coming through the corner in which I crashed. What was interesting was that where I thought I was pretty consistent lap after lap, the photos told another story. Heck, I was all over the track, from the inside edge to almost halfway across! And my body position was inconsistent also, which I am sure that was

a function of fatigue. As the day wore on, I was hanging off less and just leaning more with a more upright body angle. When I initially lost it, I thought the front had washed out. But looking at the pictures, I could see that I actually levered the rear off the track, and the ground-off muffler bracket on the right side verified that later. I have read stories of pro racers starting to slide and levering the bike back up onto the tire, but by the time I thought about that I was halfway home in the car. This gives me new respect for the way they handle those bikes.

Anyway, the good news was that my leathers, boots, and helmet all did their job perfectly, and I did not have the slightest bruise or injury. What looked pretty bad at first on the bike turned out to be mostly cosmetic, and after a few weeks on eBay and a couple of hundred dollars, I had the bike back together with the only permanent damage being a large dent in the tank. The major items I had to replace were right handlebar, front brake lever, start/kill switch, and upper fairing and windscreen. I cannot emphasize how glad I was that I had good protective gear, including a back protector. The last issue of *Desmo Leanings* [*Summer 2004, Vol. 2, No. 2*] had a great article about prepping for a track day – use those checklists!

As I said, in my case I was lucky, and the only damage was to my ego and the bike. But it could easily have been different. We all know that risk is there and feel that we can manage it, or we would not do it. That is part of why we ride bikes in the first place, and especially on the track. For regular racers, crashing can become almost routine, but for me it was a big deal, and I am relieved to have it behind me and realize it was not the end of the world. Now everything is back together, and it is time to get back out there. Ride safe...and sane!





# MID-OHIO VINTAGE RACING '04

PHOTOS BY GARY MEYERING



Vintage Vincent



Nice Moto Guzzi V7 Sport







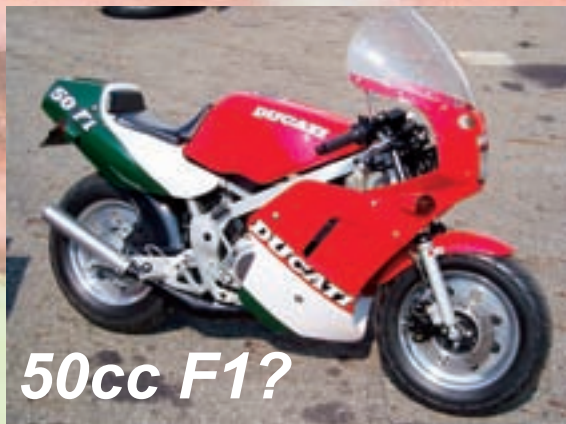
Morini single



Kawasaki 2 by 4



Vintage MX: Old as Dirt



50cc F1?



# GOING TO KEY WEST FOR NEW YEAR'S

By Terry Boling

The best way to start the story of this trip is to tell of the origin of motivation. After living in the lower, much-flatter area of South Carolina, I moved to the upstate in 1996. At the time, I owned only a Harley Davidson, a boyhood dream of mine. I never felt that a sportbike was a style of riding I would desire until I started scraping hard parts in the mountains. I started looking at the sportbikes offered by the Big Four and Ducati and liked what I saw and read about the Ducatis. In March of 2000, I had gone to Bike Week in Daytona and asked every Ducatisti I could find about their experiences of Ducati ownership. Two weeks later, I bought a new, yellow 1999 SS750 with full fairing.

I was riding the Ducati every chance I found, but with my work schedule and required overtime, riding time was scarce. The riding style was much different than I was used to, and it was VERY addictive. Working the night shift, I started to sleep less, so I could ride more. Three months into my Ducati ownership, my riding ended abruptly.

On Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, with only three hours of sleep after working over 40 hours that week, I was riding in the mountains of North Carolina and wound up in Asheville. I decided to ride home on the Blue Ridge Parkway. I was speeding, passing cars in no-passing zones, and being careless. I rode from Asheville all the way to the overlook at Highway 215 and stopped for about five minutes to calm down before heading south. I did not ride five miles when it all happened. There was a short straight where I decided to look down at something on the bike. As I started to raise my head, I saw my front tire going off the edge of the road. The left-hand curve arrived sooner than I had expected! All I had time to think was, "This is gonna hurt!"



The bike and I hit the side of the mountain at about sixty miles an hour. The noise I heard was a combination of many things doing unnatural acts. One of those sounds was my right femur breaking into three pieces. My right shoe was pulled from my foot as I was ejected from the saddle, and I started to tumble, head-over-heels. It was not with any of that special, movie-type slow motion, but in real time. It all happened very quickly, and I remember seeing blue-green-blue-green-blue as the sky and ground alternated before me. I soared over a drainage culvert where my bike finally rested, and I eventually came to a stop in a ditch, 225 yards from the initial point of impact.



After the accident, the lectures on how dangerous motorcycles are seemed endless, and I was being constantly asked if I was going to ride again. In September, I could not resist and bought a new 1998 ST2 that was gathering dust at a local dealership. Because of the accident, I started to think that life really was too short and there was a lot of the United States I wanted to see before I pass on. I decided I had to see some of those sights, and starting the year 2001 in a special way would be a step in that direction. I had thoughts of starting it in Key West, Florida.

While at my parent's house during Thanksgiving, I had playfully mentioned about riding the bike from Easley, South Carolina, to Key West. I then mentioned it again during Christmas, but I still had not made any definite plans. On December 28<sup>th</sup>, I was told that I did not have to work on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and decided to make the trip. After work, I went straight home and packed the bike.

The next morning, I opened my eyes to a very rude awakening. It was 29 degrees outside! A record-setting cold front from the north had come through during the night. I do not own any fancy heated grips or a heated vest, so I bundled up the best I could and set out alone. I rode to a friend's shop in Mauldin, South Carolina. It was only about thirty-five miles, but I was chilled to the bone. The warmth felt good while socializing with the owner and mechanic. I debated turning around and heading back home, but through the discussion, I became motivated by the two guys and their stories of their trips and decided to continue on mine.

With a short delay at the Ducati dealer in Columbia to warm up a little, I stopped for gas outside of town. During this stop, I put on my rain suit, hoping to reduce the wind that was going through me. It was already past one in the afternoon, and I had been on my trip for over four hours to cover a distance that usually would take a little over two. The temperature was hovering around fifty degrees, and this was not turning into the "fun" I was hoping for.

About an hour later, I was on I-95 heading south. Traffic was terrible! Within thirty minutes, I was standing on I-95 with both feet.

We were at a total standstill and in the middle of Nowhere, South Carolina. I assumed there was an accident, but it was stop-and-go at a painfully slow pace for about an hour, and I never saw one. The congestion made absolutely no sense to me. I started to observe the vehicles around me, and it was then that I started to take notice of something. Most of the vehicles were sporting stickers, banners, and flags of football teams from around the country. I was stuck in traffic because of the bowl games! I have never been a fan of this particular sport, and I was starting to dislike it even more. *[For a mostly congestion-free alternative to I-95 through South Carolina and Georgia, try U.S. Highway 301. Ed.]*

When I finally decided to end the day, the first hotel I came to had a vacancy, and I took it. My original goal was to ride to Melbourne before the end of the first day, but with the cold and the traffic, I made it only to Ormond Beach. Twelve hours after leaving, I had ridden only 460 miles of the thousand-mile journey. I was tired, sore, cold, and disappointed in how the day had gone. I doubt the temperature ever got above fifty-five degrees. Once in the room, I did not even unpack the panniers. I took a long, hot bath to try to regain the warmth in my body. After filling the tub twice, my thighs did not feel cold anymore. The warmth and comfort of the bed overtook me as I fell asleep with the Weather Channel on the TV.

I awoke to temperatures in the very low 40s and a long and boring ride on a very straight I-95. The ride was mostly uneventful. At a gas stop just north of Miami, I decided that since it was in the upper 50s, I would at least take off my scarf. I drove about five miles, and the wind noise and cold air going down the front of my jacket was annoying. I pulled to the side of the interstate and put it back on. Ah....nice, quiet, and warm, again.

I had never been this far south and had no idea what Miami would be like. All I knew of Miami was what I had seen in movies like "Scarface" and on TV shows such as "Miami Vice". I did not see much of the city from I-95, and other than a white van attempting to take my space in the lane, it was not too bad of a drive through the city until I-95 ended.



It was strange how the interstate just seemed to disappear. There was an endless line of stoplights. I saw the local Harley dealer and figured I would stop for a T-shirt. It was here that I learned a painful thing about Key West on New Year's Eve: it is like Mardi Gras in New Orleans! The guy at the Harley dealer asked me if I had hotel reservations.

I gave him a look like that of a deer stopped in the headlights of a speeding car and could tell him only that I planned on finding a place when I got there. He sort of snickered and said, "Good luck." I stepped into the parking lot, pulled out my trusty cell phone, and called the number I had memorized of a hotel chain. The woman found only one room, and to reserve it, I would have to get it for both the 30<sup>th</sup> AND 31<sup>st</sup>. At \$230 EACH night, I made reservations in Florida City at a sub-\$50 per night. I was still about 120 miles from Key West, though!



I did make it to Key West and had a great time despite the cold weather following me. Miami had a low of 34 degrees that first night and the high for Key West was 65 degrees on New Year's Eve day. Seeing the monument, the inverted Christmas tree in the Hog's Breath Saloon, and meeting people from around the country was a great way to start my best year of motorcycling. That year, I rode over 21,000 miles, went to 24 states, and saw such sights as Mount Rushmore and Niagara Falls. Since then, I have been to 44 states, two Canadian Providences, and Mexico and seen many attractions. I have even dedicated a whole wall of a room in my house to these trips.... all this because of a broken leg on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000.





*... I rode over 21,000 miles,  
went to 24 states, and saw  
such sights as  
Mount Rushmore and  
Niagara Falls...*



# **BENCH RACING**

*Tall tales of fact and "friction"*

## **How to Load a Trailer...**

Back in the good old days when I thought I was getting to be quite the racer, I decided that I would need two bikes to get in enough racing. Thus entered my Yamaha SR500 single. It was a good bike as it had low power and forced me to learn how to corner much faster than I had even imagined I ever would. It was the first bike I ever touched a knee with!

As nice as the bike was, it did have the classic single problem of lots of vibration. One day coming into the pits at Roebing Road, a sandy infield really, I was hesitant to use too much front brake for fear of doing a low speed tuck in front of everyone. I reached down with my right foot to apply the rear brake and found the pedal had vibrated off and no brake was to be had. Not only did I run into the trailer, but I was so caught out by this that I did not have the presence of mind to put my foot down. Laugh-In crash is the operative word here.

Now I was sure the day's adventures were over, so I started to load the bike onto the trailer. I was alone, but that had never been a problem with this lightweight bike, so I went forward with the exercise. I hooked the inside tie-down to the trailer first and then onto the left handlebar. I then went to the right side of the bike and hooked up that tie-down. I then proceeded to give a mighty tug on the outside tie-down. Problem was, the inside one was not really mounted correctly. It appears that when I was leaning over, I did not notice the metal tie-down hook was pointed down instead of up, and thus it pivoted and released its hold on the trailer loop. This sudden release of the inside tie-down allowed the bike to do a pirouette, executing a nice 180 in the pike position and landing upside down on the seat and handlebars,

with wheels pointing skyward just like I use to park my bicycle when I wanted to adjust the chain! Now of course all this activity elicited the required expletive deleted. Unfortunately, this alerted the up-to-now oblivious masses of my error. Insult to injury comes to mind.

Many would-be helpers came over to see what they could do to remedy the situation, but it was hard to get much meaningful help when they could hardly stand up straight. Something about being doubled over in laughter does that to you. Gas, oil, and battery acid were merrily exiting the bike, so I just put my foot on the bottom of the motor and gave it a push. I figured I had run it into the trailer and then thrown it off the same trailer, so what more damage could I do?

Jim



## **Tale at the gas pump....**

"This one time, last year, someone took advantage of all the bikes being there (at the gas pump), filled his bike up, and left. Once I heard about it, I went into the store and asked the guy behind the counter if it was true. He said it was. I then asked him how much the gas was. Once he told me, I put the money on the counter and told him that I'd pay for it. By the look on his face, he was confused. I told him that I liked hanging out at the store and didn't want the store to turn "anti-motorcycle". I wanted to be welcomed there. I told him that I didn't want any negative thoughts or feelings toward motorcyclists, so I wanted to pay for it. It was only \$7 or so, but still, it was the principle of some asshole making us look bad."

Terry Boling





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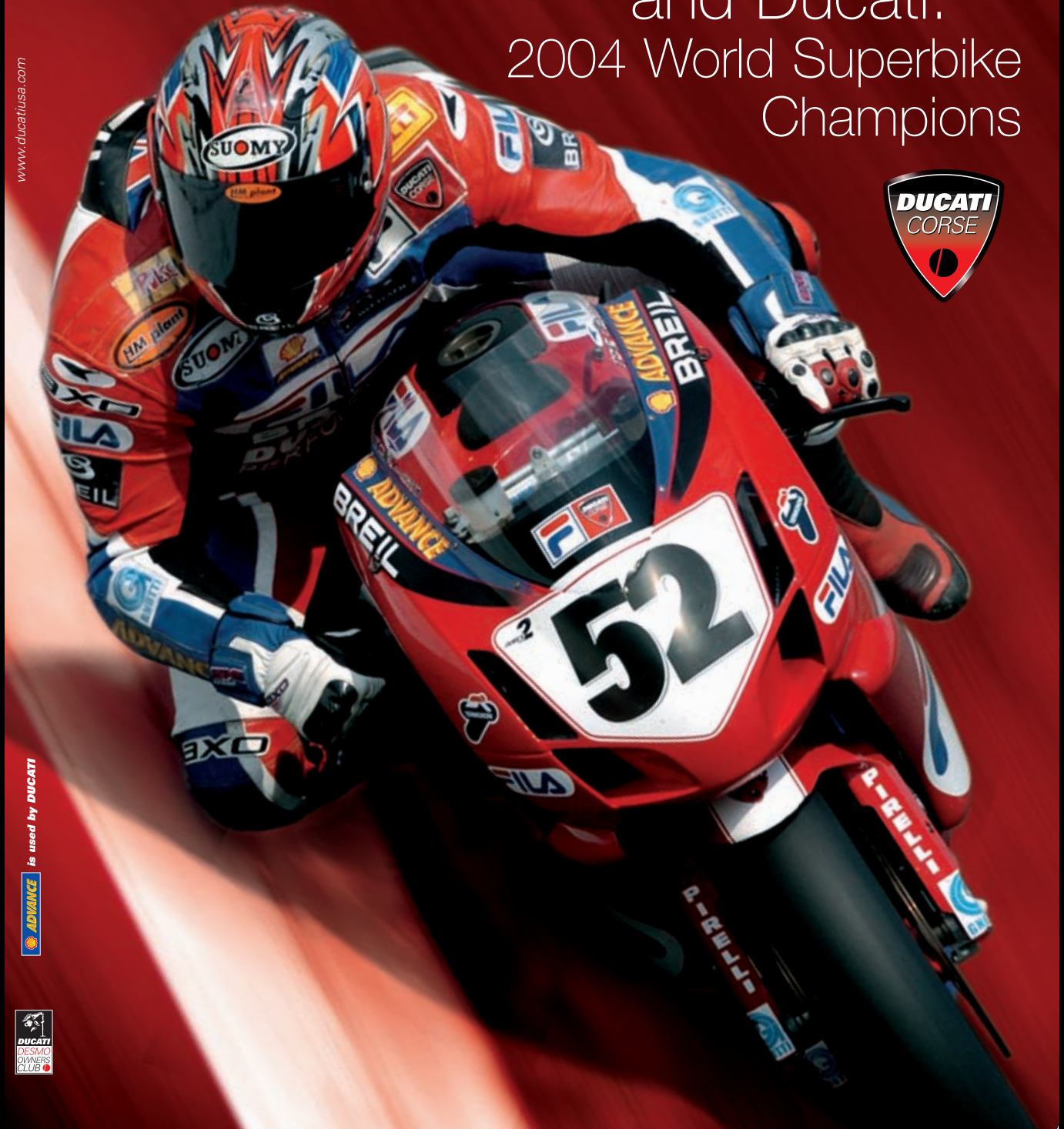




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