

DESMO LEANINGS



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

Volume 8 Issue 1

Spring 2010



***My Conversion to the Church of Ducati
Always leave your parked bike in gear, or...
The (Almost) Perfect Bike • Changing Brake Pads
The "US-DESMO Charlotte Mafia 120" • Ducati Caffé***

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Contenuto

Features

7
My Conversion to the Church of Ducati
by Jerry McNair

14
The (Almost) Perfect Bike
by George Smith

18
Changing Brake Pads
by Terry Boling

21
Always leave your parked bike in gear
by Ted Clough

25
Ducati Caffé
by Clyde Romero

27
The "US DESMO Charlotte Mafia 120"
by Larry Haber

The USual Suspects

4
Piazza Del Mercato
Classifieds

28
Bench Racing
Tall tales of fact and "friction"

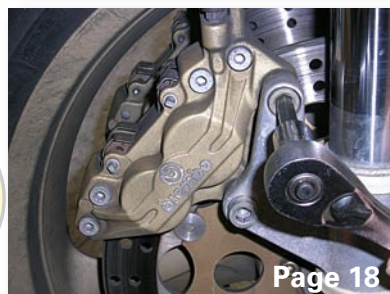
Cover shot by Jim Calandro



Page 7



Page 14



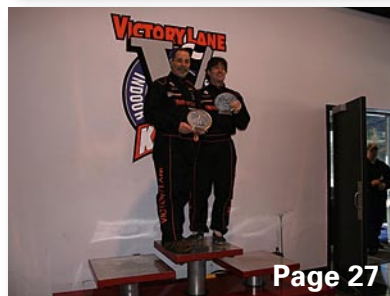
Page 18



Page 21



Page 25



Page 27

Greetings from il Capo

As much as I hate to admit this is not an original idea—the DOCC did it first—we are going to do something new this year with our magazine. In place of the final volume for 2010, we are going to make it a calendar. For the first year, we are going to use mostly local riders and their bikes, but for future calendars, we invite you to send in photos for inclusion. We need very-high-resolution photos. My calendar editor tells me that motorcycles have hard edges that need a lot of pixels.

Keep in mind we want this to be a calendar you could hang in your office and not have to worry about someone saying it is too suggestive. Nice backgrounds that bring out the bike are good, just do not park in front of something that makes it look like the bike has a tree growing out of its gas tank. Action photos or photos of you with your bike are fine—be creative, but do not do anything dangerous.

I have polled the dealers to which we distribute free copies of DESMO LEANINGS to see if they wanted to continue to receive them. I was disappointed to see that most of the dealers I sent out self-addressed, stamped envelopes to did not feel the magazine was important enough to even send back a reply. This will make it easy to reduce club expenses, because the list of dealers who get free magazines will drop from around 70 to no more than 15. One dealer that is located in South Carolina and not many miles from several of our events said they were not interested in the magazine even if it were free. At least they took the time to answer, but it does surprise me. This reduction in magazine mailings will save the club almost \$1,000 each year, so it will go a long way toward keeping dues down.

Please note that two events have had their dates moved back a week. The track day at Roebing Road, because we had originally picked the Monday after Easter and the track is closed Easter weekend. This will also take us out of conflict with MAD, a sister club. The second event, the Ducks Head West rally, was moved because of a personal conflict. Hopefully, those are all the changes we will be making.

It still looks to be a lean year, but our dues are not going up, and none of our events has any increased cost to members. We will continue to provide event mementos for our rallies, but we will try to keep the number of different items to a minimum so the club does not get stuck with a large inventory and a small bank balance.

On a personal note, I am still in remission. Like I told someone recently, it is like being in high school and getting a hall pass. I have to keep getting it renewed.

Come ride with us!

Jim

il Capo



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Piazza Del Mercato

2000 Cagiva Gran Canyon

This bike is well sorted out and in good condition. It has less than 1500 miles since receiving a very comprehensive service and new tires. The bike has a centerstand, heated grips, upgraded brakes, carbon cans, and a performance chip. It is red with silver highlights. All original components and other extras come with it. **\$3,900. Craig Hunley, Charlotte, NC. cchunley@bellsouth.net or 704.576.3447**



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1984 Honda Ascot VT 500

The carburetors have been cleaned and new jets installed, new battery, new air cleaner, new fluids, new turn signal stalks (old ones dry rotted). It looks brand new and is ready to ride. It is black and has just under 6,000 original miles. This can be a collector bike or a daily rider your choice. The paint looks like it just came off the show room and even the black chrome on the mufflers is great. Bike is totally stock. **\$2,000.00 firm, clear title in hand, Jim 704.843.0429**



1995 Ducati 916

This bike is in very good shape and has been upgraded with a 2000 996 engine. Less than 13,000 miles on the bike and less than 14,000 miles on the engine. Other upgrades include Heli bars, Sargent seat, Marchesini wheels, Ohlins shock, FIM chip, Arrows exhaust cans, EBC discs, and a ventilated clutch cover. All original components and other extras come with it. **\$5,900. Craig Hunley, Charlotte, NC. cchunley@bellsouth.net or 704.576.3447**



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1994 900sp,

very nice bike. Has been gone through from one end to the other by SMC, new belt,tires chain etc. \$3000.00 worth of work done by SMC. This bike needs nothing, truly a gas and go bike. **\$5500.00 obo contact Andy Rounds 704-309-6298 email arounds@carolina.rr.com**



1993 888SPO

6k miles, recent full service performed. In good condition throughout but has a crack in the upper left side fairing and a few scratches, Ferracci Slipons. **\$9495 OBO**

2005 Multistrada 1000DS

with S conversion. Ohlin Forks with recent Ducshop service and Ohlins Shock. Black bodywork with Red frame and Silver wheels. Full Termignoni Carbon muffler system, Race ECU, Open clutch cover, Corbin seat (Extremely comfortable), higher bars and taller screen. Ducshop serviced 10k miles. **\$8250 OBO**

1999 748S

700 miles. Yellow, Ferracci 853 Kit fitted 200 miles ago by Atlanta Ducati, full Termignoni system, Berringer red anodized front brake rotors and 6 piston calipers, carbon airbox, Ferracci clipons and windshield. New belts. Matching gold anodized clutch cover and chainguard. Absolutely mint one owner bike **\$10,495 OBO**

1990 851

6k miles, non OEM fairings recently painted in red with matching red frame. D&D High Pipes. In great condition throughout **\$5,495 OBO**

email Ducatierv@aol.com

Spring issue deadline is February 28. Summer issue deadline is May 31. Autumn issue deadline is August 31. Winter issue deadline is November 30. Please provide an accurate description of about 500 characters, price and contact information, plus a digital photograph.

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MY CONVERSION TO THE CHURCH OF DUCATI

by Jerry McNair, Member #01314

My conversion to the Church of Ducati occurred in the summer of the year of our Lord 2009, at the ripe old age of 54. At the young age of 21, I had gone astray as some do from time to time and wandered off the road of motorcycles. I had not been a motorcycle convert for that long—perhaps only three years—before I backslid and made the cage my only means of transportation. I had another calling: marriage, children, and busy schedules.

When hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana in 2004, the resultant damage caused gas prices to hit \$3 a gallon. I decided it was time for some alternate transportation, something other than the V-8, 4WD pickup I was commuting to work in. It became a matter of principle that I was not going to allow the oil gods to suck hard-earned cash from my billfold as they do crude oil from Saudi sand or ocean depths. I began to see a familiar light, although dimly. It took hold of my soul, and I told my wife I was going to get a moped to commute back and forth from work. Not exactly a full-blown conversion and commitment to walk again on that narrow path of motorized two wheels, but it was a move in the right direction. My wife was profoundly instrumental in setting my feet on the straight and narrow by balking about the moped idea. "They're too small and dangerous. I would feel better if you got a motorcycle." I've never been one to ignore sound advice.

It so happened that at that time I was working with a guy who had a 1992 BMW R100R for sale. Big motorcycle. That filled the first

requirement, plus it got about 45 mpg, beating the current 18 mpg I was getting with the truck. That would end my contribution to the guys that make billions of dollars a year on crude. I know, they'd never feel it, but I do. I purchased that bike, and for the first time in 33 years I was riding again. Some may say this was a



full-blown conversion, but under the recent ministering of il Capo, I have realized now that this was just the beginning, a dim light, a candle next to a star. I just didn't know it at the time.

After getting that feeling of riding that can't be explained to anyone who has never ridden, the bike bug bit me like the iron jaws of a pit bull. There was nothing I could do. It's completely futile to fight it. I rolled over on my back, exposed my belly like an omega dog, and surrendered without a fight. I supposed it was at that exact time I became a zealot. Early in '05 I decided I needed, as opposed to "wanted," a dual-sportbike, and the wife consented. In came an '02 Suzuki DRZ400S, and off I went learning how to ride the gravel Forest Service and old logging roads around western North Carolina. In '06, I decided I "needed" something that fit between the sport-touring BMW and the street-and-trail DRZ400S. Into the stable rolled an '05 Suzuki V-Strom 650, which turned out to be a rather sporty dual-sport ride. In '07, my boss bought an '04 Suzuki DRZ400E, which he then decided he didn't want anymore because it scared him. He was having a great deal of difficulty controlling it on gravel. I decided that I should help a brother out and be a good Samaritan, and I promptly relieved him of his fear by purchasing the bike. Does anyone see a pattern forming here? Yes, I thought I had become a true zealot.

After riding the V-Strom for a while, that BMW's older suspension technology became a matter of

disappointment to me. I really needed something a bit "sportier" than both those bikes, but one had to go for me to be able to get a sportbike. So, the BMW went up for sale. I had it at a bike shop on consignment for several months with no takers and finally decided to put it on Craigslist. It wasn't long before I started to get some interest, so I thought it would be a good idea to start looking for a used sportbike. Having been totally out of motorcycling for 33 years, never owning a sportbike, and just getting back in, I thought it would be best to get some advice from a couple of friends. Remember, I'm not one to ignore sound advice. I called Rick Tannenbaum and Doug Pippin. If you know these two gentlemen, you would not be surprised to hear that the advice was pretty much limited to either a Suzuki SV650S or almost any kind of Ducati you can find in sound mechanical condition, with few exceptions. At the time, my knowledge of Ducatis was exceedingly limited, apparently due to not having seen the light completely as il Capo would have one see it. One must be shown the light before seeing the light. To make my point concerning my blindness, I remember the first time I met Rick at one of our local riding-club Sunday-morning breakfasts. He rode in on one of his Ducatis, and the first thing I noticed was what we all know as the "music" that resonates from an open dry clutch cover. "What the heck is that noise?" I thought. "That guy's bike is about to fall apart," was the next thing I thought. Obviously, I knew

very little then. This ignorance is almost embarrassing to have to admit, but confession is good for the soul. Thanks to Rick and a few others, I began to learn a little more about these artistically styled bikes and sportbikes in general.



So the search began for either a Suzuki SV650S or a Ducati. After a long eight months, the BMW finally sold to a German fellow who was totally stoked to get the bike. It's always kind of nice to know that a bike you've taken good care of is going to a good home. As a result of the sale, the search for a sportbike really started in earnest. I have cash in hand! I asked both Rick and Doug if I could email links to them about bikes I had found to get their opinion. The first was a beautiful Honda Super Hawk. I asked Rick about it and he said, "Probably not right for you, but ask Doug, he owned one." Doug's response was, "No. You'll get bored with it quickly and besides, you're too tall for that bike. Hold out for an SV650S." I was a little disappointed to hear that, but I took the advice, sort of. To no one's surprise, I'm sure, Rick was touting the Ducatis but being careful to educate me on which ones were the better models. You know, he's a good disciple of the Church of Ducati, perhaps even an apostle. The more I talked to Rick, the more I decided that a Ducati was what I would prefer to have, so that narrowed the searching down to just one brand of bike. Little did I know, I had taken the correct fork in the road—the "high road," if you please. I spent hours looking and sending emails back and forth trying to find something I thought was just the right bike. One of the most frustrating things was emailing for information on a bike for sale and not getting any response from the seller, but there were quite a few out there so, not to worry.

Then one day I stumbled upon an ad for a '98 900SS FE in Charlotte. I took one look at the picture of that bike and immediately recognized it. Not bad for someone

that was Ducati challenged. I remember I had read an article on it about a year ago in Motorcyclist Magazine's "Smart Money" section. The author of the article had nothing but good things to say about it, and I thought it was an awesome-looking bike. Now that is a bike I would love to have, and the price seemed reasonable. I emailed the link to Rick, and he promptly responded with an affirmative on that model and the price. So, I emailed the owner with the "Is this bike still available?" question. No response. Tried a couple of more times and got the same thing, no response. I was talking to Rick about it one day, and he suggested I call a friend of his near Charlotte, gave me his name, and then told me a couple of things. First, you may have a hard time reaching him because he's been working out a lot. He's coming off a battle with cancer and he's fighting it tooth and nail. Second, he may even be willing to go test ride the bike for you if it's close enough to his home. Now that would be a handy thing to offer me, since I almost destroyed my knee in a hard crash on the DRZ400E. At the time, it was swollen to the size of a large grapefruit and unbendable.

So he put me in touch with Jim—yes, the one and only il Capo himself. The first communication was through email with all the information about the bike and then through the phone. The first response I got from Jim was offering to go test ride the bike for me and the second was jokingly saying that if he liked it a lot he might buy it out from under me. That was a good stab, but I immediately knew he was indeed joking. One thing Jim made perfectly clear, and that is that we were



going to succeed in getting me—and I quote—a "proper" bike. "You are coming over from the dark side into the light." In other words, "I'm gonna convert you, pal!" I did not know I was in the hands of a formidable member of

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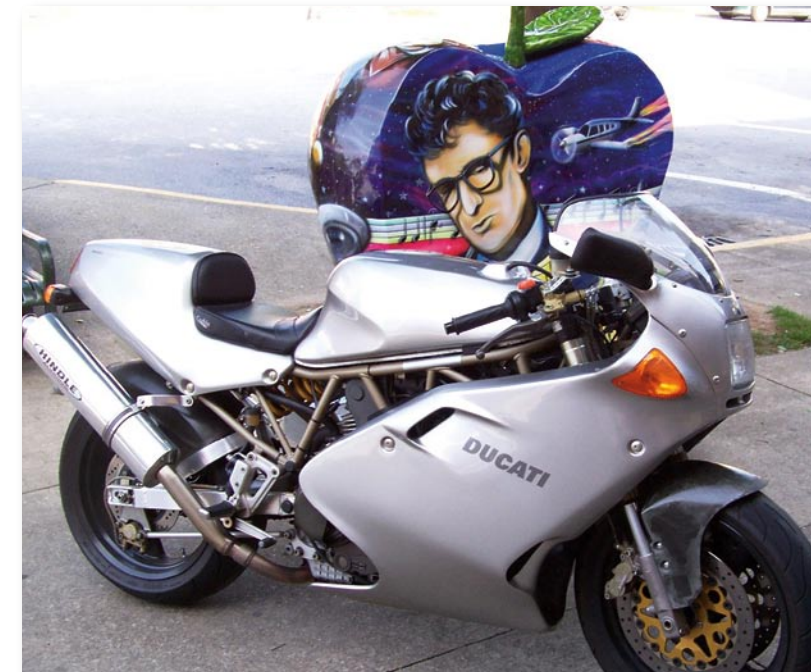
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“the Church.” After a phone conversation with Jim, he admitted he was looking for something for himself, but it needed to be more cosmetically challenged, something for the track and something he wouldn't shed tears over if he dropped it. I told him I was looking at a Duck in Asheville that might fit the bill, and if he was interested, I would let him know more about it. In just a day or two, Jim contacted me and said he had an appointment in a couple of days with the seller to test ride the bike and would get back with me on the results. Now the reality of acquiring this bike was starting to settle in and I was getting very excited—I'm talking Christmas-morning-excited-when-you-were-a-kid kind of excitement.

Have you ever had a feeling come over you that you absolutely had to do something? Something “right” or “kind” for someone or for some “cause”? One of those feelings that's overwhelming and you just say to yourself, “No, I really don't need to do that,” or you ask yourself, “why do I need to do that?” No matter how you try to reason it away, because it really doesn't make any sense, the feeling will not go away. I had one of those on the Saturday morning the day before Jim was due to go test ride that FE. For some reason, I still do not know why, I had to offer Jim the opportunity to buy that bike if he found that he wanted it. This “feeling” would not go away no matter how much I questioned the validity of taking this opportunity and giving it to someone I'd never met face to face. I told my wife about it, and she said, “Do what's in your heart; you can never go wrong with that.” So, I called Jim and told him, “If you like the bike, it's yours. I'll look into the one in Asheville.” “No,” was his first response, and his second, and I think his third, until I convinced him that I really did want him to take the bike if he wanted it. In

the end I don't think either of us conceded; me because I really wanted him to have it, and he because he didn't want to buy it out from under me and didn't want a “pretty” bike anyway.

The day of the test ride came and went. I received an e-mail from Jim with notes about what was right and wrong with the bike. Very few things wrong with it: the odometer cable was not working, the low-fuel light was glowing weakly, and the fasteners looked a little weathered. Those were the only issues. The seller promised to hold the bike for Jim, who was only test riding for me. I was beginning to think this is going to be my “dream” bike. About the same time, Jim, being the ultimate Ducatisti he is, decided that it was such a nice bike (and since I had offered it) he would like to add that one to his stable. So Jim was really excited about getting a low mileage '98 FE, and I was, truth be known, a little disappointed. However, I meant what I said to Jim about taking that bike and never had any regrets. So, here I go, off

trudging through Craigslist again. “No biggie,” I thought. “I'll just get this other Duck over here in Asheville.” I think it was the very next day, which gave Jim plenty of time for dreaming of little silver FEs dancing in his head, he got notice from the seller (to protect the guilty, we'll call him Richard or, if you prefer, Dick for short) that he has decided to sell it to his niece so she can re-sell it and make a little money on it. I believe Jim's exact words to me were, “Jerry, you could have knocked me over with a feather.” Jim had offered Richard \$500 to hold the bike, but Richard turned it down and assured Jim it was his



because of who he is: il Capo. Jim and I emailed one another back and forth in disbelief and began speculating what really was happening here. I began to think my guru had come face to face with the devil himself.

Back to Craigslist I go again and attempted to

contact the guy in Asheville about the other Duck. After about eight unanswered calls, I decided he did not want to sell after all. Four unanswered emails to someone in Charlotte with a Duck also convinced me the seller did not really want to sell. Another opportunity arose with a gorgeous '97 900SS with lots of upgrades, but the seller would not budge on the price and wanted a little more than I could afford and had agreed upon with my wife. A couple of weeks went by, and on a Monday I found a Duck in Stone Mountain, Georgia. After a couple of inquiring emails, I told my wife if that one was still for sale the following Friday, I was leaving Saturday to pick it up. It sold to someone in Illinois that Thursday. The

it himself from Charlotte to my house, at which time I would give him \$1,000 less than his original asking price. He did not appreciate that offer, and his ensuing email confirmed a few things. First, he had lied about selling it to his niece, as he had stated in this same email that he had sold it to her but then turned around and admitted that he had the unsigned title in hand and could sell it to anyone he liked. Hmm. Second, his spelling and grammar was that of a four year old. Third, he had a propensity for spewing forth expletives like fireballs from a Roman candle. And fourth, he had a distaste for me personally. "I'll chop the bike in half with a Sawzall, or ride the piss out of it, or donate it to the homeless before I sell it to you," were his exact words. The entire email was so bizarre that I have kept it now for several months and intend to keep it for posterity. I often wonder who the poor soul was that ended up getting stabbed with Richard's pitchfork and battered about by his forked tail in acquiring that FE. I would not be surprised if he still has it—in a little pile of Sawzalled metallic dust particulates, readied for the fiery furnace.

I continued to look at the Myrtle Beach FE. Like the tongue to the missing tooth, I could not restrain myself. I was convinced the bike would be sold each time I entered the search to look at it, but each time it would pop up like the proverbial jack-in-the-box with just as much surprise. Then it hit me, "Hey knucklehead, call the guy and make an offer. He can't kill you." Or as il Capo would probably say, "Have faith, my son." On the other hand, the money I was ready to pay for it and offer to him could insult him, and that is something I did not want to do, even though I did not know the man. I finally decided to make the call, with

the expectation that he would not take my offer. After introducing myself, the first thing I said was, "I'm not trying to lowball you. I'm convinced you can get your asking price, but I have recently sold an old BMW and have "X" amount of money to put with that and thought it would do no harm to make the offer." I understood perfectly when he explained that he could not go that low. I suggested he look at other ways to advertise it to increase his chances of getting his asking price. Just as I was ready to wish him luck and hang up the phone, he said, "You sound like a nice guy. How 'bout we meet half way." "Excuse me?" I said. "How 'bout we meet half way?" He may as well have said he'd changed his mind and had increased the selling price. You see, my wife and I have been married 32 years. We have a system that works for us when it comes to spending a lot of money on things for ourselves. We run it by the other and come to an agreement. The agreement she and I had made in the purchase of another bike was "X" amount of money, no more. I explained that to him and said I would have to run it by the wife, that's just the way we do it. He said to call him back and let him know. My wife was out at



path indeed is rough and steep. In the meantime, Jim had found another FE in Myrtle Beach and sent the link to me. The price was way higher than I was ready to pay, so I just drooled over it, going to the link every couple of days to just look at it and see if it had sold. Another couple of weeks go by and I get a call at work from none other than Richard the demon, the guy with the '98 FE in Charlotte. He wanted to know if I was still interested in buying the bike. According to Mr. Honesty (he who talks with forked tongue and howls like a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing), everyone was trying to lowball him on the purchase price. Yeah, right. To say the least, I was a little taken aback and told him I was not interested. When I got home from work I found that he had e-mailed me prior to calling me. I thought this was my opportunity to tell him what I thought about his previous business dealings with Jim and me. So I very diplomatically told him what I thought about him without using any expletives whatsoever. This was a very arduous task. I succeeded, and in the end told him I was looking at one in Myrtle Beach but would still be interested in his bike. However, he would have to deliver



the time, but as soon as she drove up in the driveway, I met her at the car door. I explained the whole thing and she conceded the extra money. Bless her heart! I called the guy back within 15 minutes and told him to consider it sold. I offered to send money for him to hold it for me, but he refused. He was going to take my word for it. My immediate response was to assure him that a catastrophic event equivalent to the Apocalypse was the only thing that would prevent me from coming down that Sunday to get the bike. The Apocalypse didn't come, so the bike now resides in my garage. When I went to pick it up, I did not even test ride it. My brother went with me and said, "I noticed you didn't even test ride it. Why

not?" My only response was, "It would have been heresy." After all, I have been converted to the Church of Ducati, and one must have faith.

I am now the proud owner of no. 67 of only 800 manufactured and only 300 imported to the United States. I want to thank Jim for taking me under his wing and treating me like he's known me for years. Thanks to Rick, Joyce, Doug, Eric, Marvin, and others who have extended invitations to ride and have given sound advice about many things pertaining to motorcycling and riding in general, and especially for waiting at the intersection for me to catch up. To all my brothers and sisters in the Church of Ducati, I wish you happy and safe motoring. 🏍️

MEET THE MEMBER

George Smith

The (Almost) Perfect Bike

by George Smith, Member #01261

Last was a Ducati owner back in the early '80s when my stable of rides contained a '70s-vintage kick-start 860GT. It had its faults, but all-in-all was a pretty cool bike, and one that had lots of "personality." Because the foot peg would sometimes unfold itself when kick starting the bike, I still don't wear shorts today. Too many scars on the shin. Adults avert their eyes in quiet revulsion, and grandbabies ask too many questions. It's easier to just put on sweats. In addition, we didn't know anything back in those days about repetitive motion injuries. It took another decade or so for the wrist and hand pain resulting

from the heavy clutch to acquire a name.

Other memories are purely mental, but just as long lasting. The agricultural whirring of 8,472 ball and roller bearings inside the beautiful bevel-drive motor. The distinct V-twin booming exhaust note, so different from my Norton and Triumph. Even the styling. I'm one of the few on the planet who actually liked Guigliaro's origami-type styling, and after repainting it in a way-ahead-of-its-time Tri-Colore scheme, I thought it was beautiful.

But it was a handful until it got on the open road, and I sold it for something that would fit my needs a



little better. Fast forward a few years, and I've had the chance to ride newer Ducatis thanks to friends Calandro, Hunley, and Birchfield, and I've noticed how almost Oriental the newer bikes are in some respects. The switchgear is no longer a head-scratcher, and it actually works. The speedometer holds a steady speed instead of estimating an MPH range that you might be going. The engine is now mechanically quiet, though the dry clutch compensates for that. And there's a magic button on the right handlebar that you just press, and the bike runs!

So, of course, when a nice '96 900SS came my way, I jumped on the opportunity and became a Ducati owner again after 25 years or so. Back on the road last Friday, and I noticed Ducati tried hard to make this bike the perfect Italian Riding Experience. A short checklist:

- **Awkward, uncomfortable riding position. Check.** A little aggressive for entry-level geezers like me.
- **Hard saddle. Check.** See above.
- **Frequent, expensive maintenance. Check.** Perfect for those on a fixed income. Even better for those not mechanically inclined.
- **Limited steering**

lock. Check.

Turning around in the basement among all the other bikes gets you all warmed up before the ride. Calandro says to just lift it by the "Do Not Lift" handle.

• **Engine/driveline snatch. Check.** Tall gearing, 90-270 degree firing order, and lack of rear-hub cush drive let the rider easily distinguish between riding in town and riding on the open road. Just in case you missed the city-limit signs.

• **Spring-loaded side stand. Check.** An easy way to add a

little "personality" to your bodywork.

• **Useless mirrors. Check.** They have really nice paint on the backside and probably produce minimal drag.

Our Italian friends failed to make it perfect, however. They managed to leave off a few features. To wit:

• **Gutless motor. Left out.** Almost everybody who rides another brand of bike enjoys this. What was Ducati thinking in putting all this power into a bike and not making the rider have to work for it?

• **Noodly handling. Left out.** If you make a bike





that handles and corners with this level of speed and precision, riders may tend to use that capability and may even venture onto race tracks. That's dangerous!

• **Anonymity. Left out.** Unless your ride is plain and anonymous, you might be tempted to check yourself out in shop-front windows. Again, dangerous. Also the rider is often delayed at gas stops or convenience stores by people wanting to talk Ducati. Inconvenient.

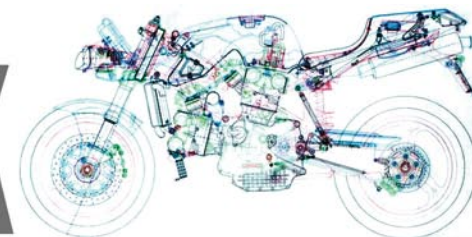
• **Flat, bland exhaust note. Left out.**

Who wants to hear these things anyway?

Despite the bike's obvious deficiencies, I hope to keep it and work around those faults I can't fix. One reason is the discovery that some of the finest people I know ride Italian bikes, and they always seem to be generous with their time, their expertise, parts, and their friendship. For that, I can overlook a few shortcomings in my bike!



Tek Talk



CHANGING BRAKE PADS

Terry Boling, Member #00297

Unless you change motorcycles as frequently as you change your underwear, a time will come when your brake pads will need to be replaced. Since riding styles and conditions change, mileage cannot be an indicator of pad wear, so regular inspections are required. Some manufacturers suggest checking brake pads every 3000-4000 miles, but you can also make it a part of your pre-ride inspection.

If you look carefully at the calipers and rotors from the front of the bike, or through the front wheel, you can see the distance between the metal portion of the pad and the rotor. This distance will reflect the thickness of the remaining pad. To inspect the pad more thoroughly, you will need to remove the caliper.

Before starting, check the level of the fluid in the brake master cylinder reservoir, but if fluid has not been added since the last time the pads were replaced, the level should be fine. Some people opt to crack open the reservoir cap to allow air to escape, but do not remove it entirely. To remove the caliper, loosen and remove the two mounting bolts on each caliper. For most motorcycles, especially of Italian origin with 320mm rotors, the front calipers will not simply slide off the rotors because of a lack of clearance between the rotor and rim. Slide the caliper toward the rim, and with smooth pressure, roll the caliper on the rotor to slowly pry the pads apart if working on a front caliper. If the cap is removed from the master cylinder reservoir and the pads are pried apart too quickly, a nice stream of brake fluid can soar through the air and cover anything in its line of shot. If overflowing the reservoir does occur, be aware that DOT 3 and DOT 4 brake fluid can ruin the paint, and the fluid will need to be cleaned with a mild cleaner that is safe for the paint. I usually use a damp cloth, dry, and re-wax the area. Some people use a cleaning agent such as Purple Power or Simple Green for cleaning up brake fluid. Once the pads are pried apart, roll the caliper out from between the rotor and rim, with care taken to not scratch your rim.

With the caliper removed, there are two ways to check for pad wear. On some pads, one or several grooves are used as wear indicators. Once the groove gets shallow or is no longer visible, the pads need to be changed. Some pads do not have these wear grooves, and, in this case, measuring the thickness of the pad is necessary. I use aftermarket EBC pads, and the company recommends changing the pads once the thickness is 2mm (5/64").

Caliper styles changed between years and models, so pad-retaining systems vary. With many of the Brembo calipers, the pins that hold the pads in place are retained by "R" clips. If the loop of the clip is not visible, use some pliers to rotate the retaining pin. When the clips are accessible, use needle-nose pliers to pull them out and then push the retaining pin out of the caliper. Some calipers of the late '80s



Pre-ride inspection



Removing the caliper bolts



Sliding the caliper off of the rotor



Rotating the retaining pin to align "R" clip for removal

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Removing the safety "R" clip



"R" clip removed and pulling the retaining pin



Removing the second "R" clip with needle-nose pliers



Pulling out the second retaining pin



Showing the orientation and removal of the pad spring



Holding the pads in the caliper from underneath

on through the '90s use a compression bushing, so a hammer and drift may be required to drive the pin out. The front Brembo calipers on the ST2 use two pins, and pin removal is the same for each. Before removing the pins, take note of the position of the pad spring. The spring is the metal plate sitting on top of both pads on the exterior of the caliper. Some of these springs have a position arrow, but others do not. With both pins removed on the ST2, the pads drop out of the bottom of the caliper. If by any chance the caliper is turned upside-down with the pins removed, the pads will fall out the top.

The quick way of replacing the pads is by pushing the pistons into the caliper (discussed later) and installing the new pads. I never do this because the pistons usually have dirt, grime, or even rust on them. Cleaning and inspecting the pistons helps to ensure that the piston seals are not damaged. Another advantage with clean pistons is the reduction of brake drag or abnormal pad wear.

To clean the pistons, first spray them with brake cleaner or other cleaner that is compatible with the material of the piston seals. Be careful, because brake cleaner is highly flammable! If the pistons are not clean and shiny, further cleaning can be performed with an old toothbrush and a rag soaked in brake cleaner. Do NOT use anything that can scratch or damage the piston contact surface because this can damage the piston seals. If pitting from rust or other damage is noticed on a section of the piston that will have to go past the seal, the pistons will need to be replaced, which is beyond the scope of this article.

On rare occasion, it may be necessary to push the pistons out of the caliper a little to get them clean, but extreme caution needs to be taken because the pistons can be pushed entirely out of the caliper. Slowly pull on the brake lever only the amount necessary to get the piston out to clean it. Multi-piston calipers



Removing the used pads from the bottom of the caliper



Comparison of the friction material between new pads and used pads



Cleaning the retaining pin with solvent and an old toothbrush



Cleaning the pad spring



The dirty caliper



Spraying the caliper with cleaner



Cleaning inside the caliper and exposed pistons with an old toothbrush



The cleaned caliper



Pushing the pistons into the caliper using the old brake pads and a large screwdriver



Showing the pistons pushed back into the caliper



Positioning the new pads in the caliper



Showing the pad spring in place and its orientation

may require using fingers, wedging a socket, piece of wood, or other object against those pistons that you do not want to move. [Lowe's sells packages of wooden wedges for shimming door frames that can be used for this—Ed.]

Once the pistons and caliper are clean, installation of the new pads can be performed. Pay very close attention to the fluid level in the reservoir and slowly push all the pistons into the caliper. The pistons will need to be retracted far enough to provide adequate clearance to slide the caliper back on the rotor with the new pads installed.

With multi-piston calipers, pushing all the pistons into the caliper can become frustrating because as one piston is pushed in, another can push back out. Dropping the old pads into the caliper and using a screwdriver between the pads to pry the pistons as far back as necessary can make this task easier. Remember: **KEEP AN EYE ON THE FLUID LEVEL!**

With the pistons retracted, slide the new pads into place, position the pad spring on the caliper, and slide the pin(s) into place. It is at this time you may notice that the spring really is a spring because the pin does not simply slide in. To get the holes aligned, you may need to apply downward pressure on the spring while pushing the pin through the caliper, pads, and spring. With the pin in position, reinstall the "R" clips, but be careful. If you load the clip but do not get it onto the pin, the clip can shoot off and land in the most remote spot in your garage.

If this happens, expect to spend more time looking for the tiny clip than it took to work on the brakes to this point. For older pins with the compression ring, a light tap with a hammer will help seat the pins into place. With the pads installed, roll the caliper back onto the rotor and reinstall



Sliding the first retaining pin back into the assembly



Pushing the retaining pin into the assembly with a thumb



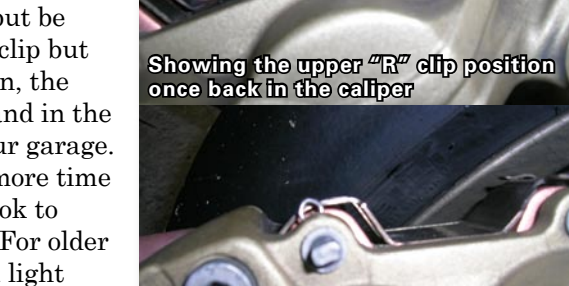
Installing the "R" clip



Showing the reinstallation of the "R" clip



Showing the upper "R" clip position once back in the caliper



Showing the lower "R" clip in position after reinstallation



The lower "R" clip rotated into toward the caliper to prevent backign out

Showing the orientation of the lower "R" clip in relation to the caliper wall

there is a risk of pushing the pads together and almost not having enough clearance to push the pads back apart, so do not do this.

With new brake pads installed, flushing the brakes with fresh fluid is thoroughly recommended. Fresh fluid will assist in the increased braking performance of the new pads. Bleeding the brakes is not difficult. If you are unsure how to bleed the brakes, the procedure is the same as bleeding the clutch, which Jim Calandro describes in the Tek Talk: Clutch Maintenance article of the Summer 2007 issue of DESMO LEANINGS (pp. 19-21)



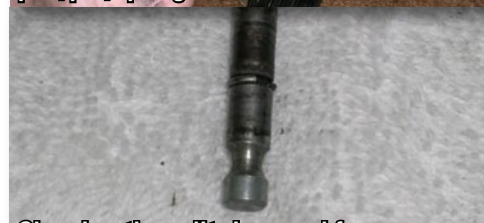
Early front caliper (Paso 750)



Paso caliper removed and showing the plastic cover hiding the internals



Cover removed and showing the Paso's pad/pin/spring orientation



Showing the split ring used for compression fitting of a Paso 750 retaining pin

the caliper bolts.

When the new pads are installed and the caliper is positioned on the rotor, make sure to pump the brakes to engage the pads on the rotor. If this step is skipped, you will NOT have any brakes the first time the bike is ridden, which is probably not a good thing. I usually pump up the first caliper before working on the second one. This makes more room in the reservoir for the fluid from the second caliper. You do NOT want to pump the brakes with the caliper off the rotor. If the brake is pumped with the caliper off the rotor,

there is a risk of pushing the pads together and almost not having enough clearance to push the pads back apart, so do not do this. With new brake pads installed, flushing the brakes with fresh fluid is thoroughly recommended. Fresh fluid will assist in the increased braking performance of the new pads. Bleeding the brakes is not difficult. If you are unsure how to bleed the brakes, the procedure is the same as bleeding the clutch, which Jim Calandro describes in the Tek Talk: Clutch Maintenance article of the Summer 2007 issue of DESMO LEANINGS (pp. 19-21)

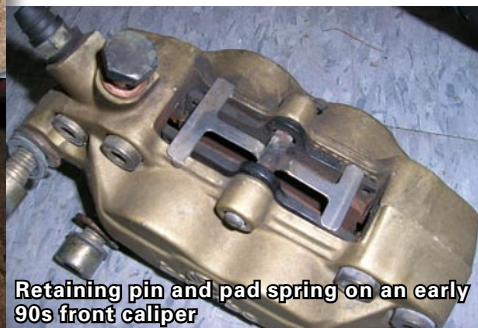
Pad manufacturers recommend that the brakes be used moderately for the first hundred miles in order to bed the brake pads. It is not recommended to do any severe braking during this period. The pads need to be bedded so that the surface material will shape itself to all the minor irregularities of the rotor. Once bedded, the pads will provide maximum contact area with the rotor for maximum braking performance.



Early single-pin compression fit with safety "R" clip)



Early dual-pin compression fit rear caliper from a Paso 750



Retaining pin and pad spring on an early 90s front caliper



An early 90s single-pin compression fit rear caliper from a '94 900SS



An R-clip installed on the single-pin, compression fit caliper from a '94 900SS



Showing the pad/pin/spring set-up on the early 90's rear caliper

Always leave your parked bike in gear, or: How I learned to ride without a clutch.

story by Ted Clough, Member #00046

There are always those riders who think it is a good idea to leave the bike in neutral when parked. That way, you never have that embarrassing moment when you start up the bike and it lurches forward because you forgot to check it was in neutral. Not that I have ever done that—let's just say I have been riding since before they had neutral lights. I was actually in the neutral camp, but that was probably because I lived in Florida for almost 30 years, and it is hard to find a hill, so the chance of a bike rolling off the kickstand was minimal. In the past few years, I have learned to change that practice. I'm a little stubborn, and it took two incidents, but I'm firmly in the in-gear camp now.

The first incident was in the mountains in Colorado. We had stopped to photograph one of those canyon tunnels in the Rockies. I parked my Ducati ST4 on a nice, smooth shoulder that was very slightly downhill, grabbed my camera, and took a few steps back to frame the scenic shot of my bike and also my buddy riding through the tunnel. As I watched, my bike inched forward until the stand retracted, and gently slumped onto the left side. Luckily, the hard bags and left bar tip took the brunt of the fall, and no serious harm—other than to pride—was done. Didn't learn my lesson.

The second time, I was on day two of a dream-of-a-lifetime trip in Italy. I was on a rental Ducati ST3 and had some time before a scheduled tour of the Ducati factory at 2 p.m., so I was riding by myself in the mountains just south of Bologna. These are the hills where the Ducati factory guys test their bikes, so you can imagine the roads and the scenery. I stopped just

after topping the first hill, and parked for the obligatory photo shot. This time it was sort of gravelly, and slightly downhill again, but not much. The bike was fully loaded. Again, as I framed the shot, the bike eased forward off the stand and came to rest on the left side. No problem, I thought, I've seen this before, but I was concerned as it was a rental! My biggest concern was picking up the heavy bike. I was so pumped up that I ran over and



grabbed hold and tried to muscle it up. Right away I managed to pull something in my right forearm. It felt like I had actually torn a muscle loose, but turned out later it was just a really bad muscle tendon strain that still bothers me six months later. By using the proper method of locking the bars and levering it up, I eventually

got it upright. That's when I saw I had no clutch lever. Not even a stub—no lever! It was broken off right at the pivot.

Okay, I thought, I can deal with this. I had just ridden through a small town at the crest of the hill and had seen a Carabinieri station. Maybe they could point me to a repair shop that might have some sort of lever to fit it. I knew I could ride without the clutch once I got going, but I had to go UPHILL. If I started downhill, I might have to go miles before I found a place I could turn around without a clutch. So, I turned the bike uphill on the shoulder. I figured that if I revved it to about 3000-4000 rpm and jammed it into gear, I could spin out of the gravel and keep it moving without stalling it. I know what you're thinking—there are soooo many ways this can go wrong—the worst being the rear end sliding sideways and catching the pavement as I'm aimed over

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the drop-off and launching myself and the bike about 150 feet down the grassy hill. Anyway, to make a long story short, after about the fourth try, with ever-increasing revs and a lot of flying gravel and screeching tires, I finally got going uphill and made it to the police station. The local captain, who was dressed to impress in his starched uniform and knee-high boots that would make your average CHP bike cop look like a homeless person, was very helpful and told me of a small moped repair place several miles away, all downhill, that might be able to help. With his directions and my trusty Garmin GPS, I was able to make it to the shop without too much fuss—only had to run a few lights and make one unauthorized turn—and coasted in about 11 a.m.

Now this is Italy, coming up on lunchtime, so I knew my chances



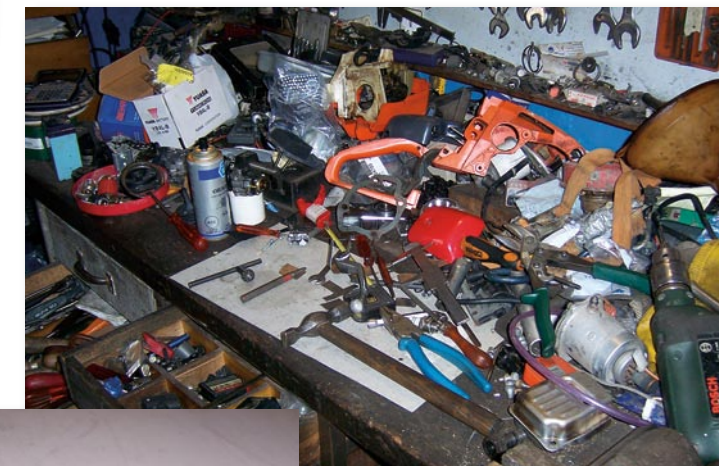
who could have done what he did, but he was gracious and stopped what he was doing to do it and didn't take advantage of me in any way. I just wanted to give him a big hug! I loaded up and zipped back



of getting anything done quickly were minimal. But I was encouraged, because this was exactly the kind of small repair place that, if it didn't have a suitable part, could weld mine, or somehow bodge a repair. There were literally dozens of old bikes and mopeds in various states of disrepair and two large rooms absolutely packed to the rafters with more old cycle-related junk that you can imagine. I showed my lever to the owner, who did not speak a single word of English, and put on my best "I'm so at your mercy, please help me" face.

He didn't say a word, just took the pieces of my lever

and went back to his bench and went to work. I could almost see the gears turning in his brain, and he soon came up with a solution. He used some sheet steel and cut, trimmed, bent, drilled, and basically rebuilt my lever with a brace around it. It was a thing of beauty—very creative, and actually well designed. He worked through his lunch time and it took him about an hour and a half to make it and reinstall it. I was so excited! I took some pictures and thanked him profusely in my pidgin Italian, and asked, "Quanto?" He thought for a second and said, "Five Euros." This was my lucky day! Not only had I found probably the only guy within hundreds of miles



into Bologna gingerly caressing the clutch as little as possible, and made it to the factory on time, where I had the opportunity to buy a new lever for a mere 80-some Euros. That's close to \$120 US. What a deal. The rest of the trip went much better, maybe because I knew I had that repaired lever for a spare. And every time I parked the bike, I made sure I snicked it into gear after I shut it down.



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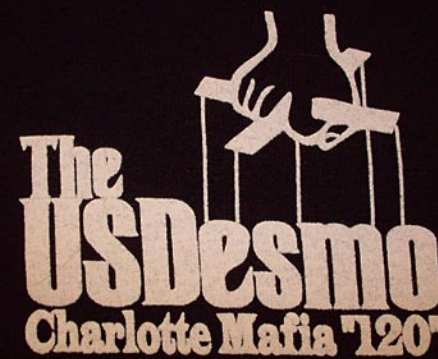


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The First Annual US DESMO Charlotte Mafia 120

By Larry Haber, Consigliere, Member #00019

It seems that most motorcycle folks hate long, cold winters. It also seems that the winter of 2009-2010 has turned out to be one of the coldest and wettest that we've had in many years. I no sooner put the Tuono on the trailer after the Halloween weekend track day at Roebing Road than BAM!: rain, wind, and cold temperatures consumed the Southeast. This really worried me. No bikes, no fun, no adrenaline rush until mid March? We had to do something, and quickly.

So the plan was set for a "winter" event. But what? Get together at Capo's new Garage Mahal and watch taped races and eat pizza? Not a bad idea, but we've done that plenty lately. We needed to think out of the box. We needed speed, competition, and most of all a day out of the house. Then Bill Birchfield suggested a go-kart race. That sounded like it could fulfill most of the "needs" that we had.

We discussed the idea with Capo, who at that time was totally consumed with getting the next edition of the club magazine out, and he said that he was busy. So I was nominated (or did I

volunteer?) to organize the event. I've had some experience doing stuff like this in the past, so the wheels started turning and the planning stage got underway for the "US DESMO Charlotte Mafia 120."

We decided to hold the event at the Victory Lane Indoor Karting Center, which is centrally located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The track is a 1/3-mile, twisting and turning road course that challenges all drivers. We also decided on a two-hour race with a team format. This would allow lots of participants to drive. Most of the teams were three-man teams, but we did have a few two-man teams. To make the day even more complete, we had an event T-shirt, drinks, trophies, and a BBQ dinner to finish the day off.


On the day before the big race, the unthinkable happened: SNOW, and lots of it. This of course concerned me because we had signed up quite a few teams that were going to be traveling to Charlotte from out of town. Would they be able to make it? Should we cancel or reschedule? So I called the track to see if they were open, and they were. The forecast for race day called for sunny skies, but cold. The roads should be clear, and the race was still on.

Race day arrived, and all of the teams showed up ready to go. We had a drivers meeting, a 30-minute on-track practice session, and then a qualifying session to determine grid position. The two-hour race was started with the wave of the Italian flag, and the hot laps began.

The competition was fierce throughout the entire field. There was some bumping, some grinding, some spinning, some "rubbing," and a good deal of



crashing! At the end of two hours, we crowned our winners. The first-, second-, and third-place teams were presented their trophies and enjoyed a podium celebration. We then relaxed with a cold beer and some hot BBQ. The day was a big success. Everyone was able

to attend, even though the weather was trying to be uncooperative. Lots of tired, sweaty, and sore US DESMO "drivers" left the track and made their way back home. There were a lot of smiles, and everyone wants to know: when are we going to do this again? 

The "US DESMO Charlotte Mafia 120" Official Results:

First Place: Team Magnattach: Rod Polen and Bill Birchfield

Second Place: The Hot Dogs: Mike Lyda, Kim Lyda, and Brian Smith

Third Place: Team Air Freek: Jared McCoig and Shaan Mohammed

Fastest Lap Award: The Hot Dogs: Mike Lyda

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Gain the knowledge, live the experience.

A Ducati Caffé

story by Clyde Romero, Member #00003

Well guys, Denise and I took a trip to Rome, Italy, to see the sights and all and decided to swing by the Ducati Caffé. The experience was outstanding to say the least. If you like pulled-pork sandwiches and chili dogs, don't come here to eat (Bill Birchfield).


We had great food and great wine! The layout of the place is unbelievable, with bikes hanging from the walls



and a great gift shop in the back. Denise, who went with me to see the POPE in Rome, and I had a great lunch and evening drink at the Ducati Caffé. The owner is a great guy and took the shirt off my back—I wore a DUC SHOP T-shirt, and the rest is history.

The bar area is great, and the bar is made of carbon fiber.



Overall, an outstanding experience and a worthwhile trip to an outstanding place. It's a must-see if you are in that part of the world. 

US DESMO SCHEDULE 2010

Track Day – Monday, April 12, Roebing Road, Savannah, Georgia

Ducks Along The Blue Ridge (DABR) – April 30-May 2, Mt Airy, NC

Track Day – Monday, May 17, Carolina Motorsports Park, Kershaw, SC

Ducks Head West (DHW) – August 13-15, Erwin, Tennessee

Ducks Fly South (DFS) – September 17-19, Hiawassee, Georgia

Track Weekend – October 9-10, Carolina Motorsports Park, Kershaw, SC

Track Weekend – October 30-31, Roebing Road, Savannah, Georgia

see www.usdesmo.com for more information and registration forms

BENCH RACING

Tall tales of fact and “friction”

Rain suit? I don't need no stinkin' rain suit.

by Jim 'il Capo' Calandro, Member #00001

When I was stationed in Germany with the Army, I had an old Volkswagen Beetle as my main transportation. Seeing as how it was really designed as a commuter car and not an Autobahn bomber, I found myself having to do a lot more than routine maintenance. One year I needed to replace a valve—it seems they are not supposed to be heart shaped. :-)

Fortunately, the Army has auto craft shops with a mechanic on duty and tools you can check out. They provide the technical expertise and often will lend a helping hand. So while the motor was out for a new valve, why not change the slipping clutch and the starter motor that frequently allowed me to practice my bump-start technique? So off it went to live in the craft shop for a few days while I stopped by each evening and worked on it.

This left me with my Yamaha DT 250 Enduro as

garment is made from, just a little heavier and with some insulation. Nothing about this suit was waterproof. So looking into my inventory of Army gear, I pulled out the trusty poncho. Now this is a wonderful garment, and if you have never used the official Army one, you have missed a big part of life. Not only does it have a hood, but it has grippers on the side so you can snap them together and form sleeves. There is also a cord around the waist to pull it tight for better protection. It is fairly long and can cover most of your body including your legs. Heck, in a pinch you can snap two of them together to make a small tent.

Well I donned my “rain gear” and headed out to work. By not tying the waist cord, it allowed me to sit on the back of the poncho and let the front cover my knees and most of my lower legs. Duly protected, I headed

“The first few days of my motorcycle commute were not too bad. It was a little cool in the mornings, but the afternoon ride was fine.”

my only means of getting to work at the S4 at Group Headquarters. Those of you who have followed my motorcycle learning curve know this bike as a teacher of many important things, and this week would be no exception! :-O

The first few days of my motorcycle commute were not too bad. It was a little cool in the mornings, but the afternoon ride was fine. The bike is actually not a bad commuter in that you sit up high and can keep an eye out for the aggressive German drivers. The only tough part was the day I had to carry the heavy starter motor to the craft shop. I did not have any type of motorcycle luggage—not sure if you could get any outside a BMW shop anyway. So my solution was to put it in a duffle bag and sling it over my back. Kind of scary to think about that now, but it worked.

Then came the day it rained. The only riding suit I had was a set of Army winter mechanic coveralls. This was a suit that zipped from the left leg to your throat. It was made of the same material every other Army

out for work. As I was going along and thinking what a clever fellow I was, I noticed a tightening of my stomach. Soon this sensation got quite uncomfortable, and it was beginning to be difficult to sit up. It shortly became obvious I had a problem, and it was the aforementioned cord. It had tangled with the chain and was now wrapping itself around the rear sprocket! :-O

It now became critical to stop, but I was in traffic and an emergency stop might make me a Mercedes hood ornament, so I tried to find a place to pull over. In the meantime, I was about flat on the tank and looked like I might have a slimmer waist than the current Miss America. Just before I stopped, the cord finally broke. It is kind of like that old joke about how good it will feel when you stop beating your head against the wall. It did feel great, but I think I would have preferred to pass on this learning experience. Other than a red welt around my waist, I was none the worse for wear, but I made sure I had my cord tied the next time I used a poncho as a rain suit.



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