

# DESMO LEANINGS



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

Volume 3 Issue 2

Summer 2005



*Things you never knew Ducati made and things that Ducati will probably never make...*

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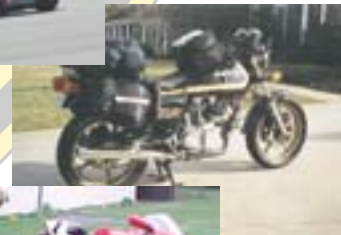
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# Greetings from il Capo

Here is issue two for 2005. Our goal is to be back on schedule by issue three but not compromise the quality of the magazine. With two editors working on Desmo Leanings we should be able to keep in on schedule. Please continue to submit articles as we can always use them. We are especially looking for humorous articles for the "Bench Racing" section so put on your thinking cap and tell us all about how you made a fool of yourself.

So many things are happening in the world of Ducati it is a full time job to keep up with them. In the last issue we covered the World Presidents Meeting and now in this issue we have the story of Ducati as the featured brand in AMA's Vintage Motorcycle Days. If you did not make the event you really missed something. The museum alone was worth the trip! There were so many bikes on display that I had never seen it was incredible. Then there were all the pre war products Ducati made that most are not aware of much less seen in person. Check out the article and you will see what I mean.

Although the year is more than half over there are still many club events to think about. If you have not ridden the roads in the SE you really need to come to "Ducks Fly South". We ride on some of the twistiest roads in the Smokey Mountains. Traffic is light and the roads are smooth. And then there is the food at the wonderful Highlands House Inn. There are several other unique events through out the different regions of the club. The best place to keep up to date on track days and events is the web page.

The club is fortunate to have two new individuals volunteer to work to plan events in the Virginia. Cortes Pauls from the Richmond area and Tom Truskolaski from the Roanoke have agreed to work together with Ducati Richmond to see what they can come up with. Some ideas have already been tossed around and if you would like to share an idea feel free to pass it along.

The year is marching on but there is still a lot of riding season left, especially for those members in the South-east. If you live in a colder part of the US why not make plans to sign up for one of the late season events in the south? 



Jim  
il Capo



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## **1967 MotoGuzzi 125 Sport**

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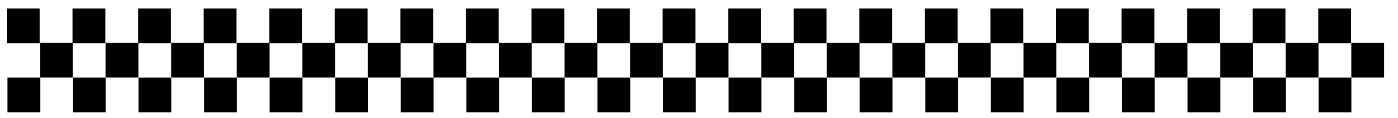


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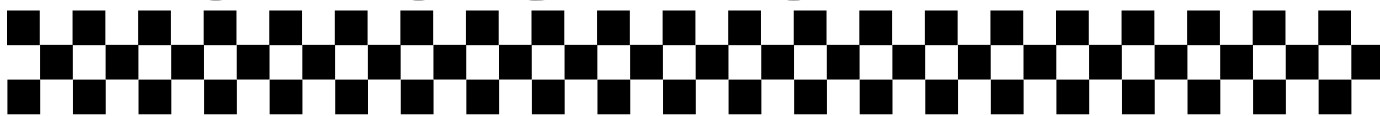


THE FIRST ANNUAL  
**MOTOGP JAM**



*Story on page 8...*

# THE FIRST ANNUAL **MOTOGP JAM**



The good news was that the MotoGP was returning to America after an eleven-year absence. The bad news for us on the East Coast was that Barber Motorsports did not get the contract. Leguna Seca did. Money, time, distance, and several other factors combined to prevent me from even considering a trip to California for this momentous event. Larry Haber of BMW-Ducati of Charlotte had an idea, and, scary as it may seem, it was actually a very good one! ☺ Just don't tell Larry I said so or it might go to his head.

Larry called several companies and organizations to see if they could assist in putting on a MotoGP Jam for those of us stuck on the East Coast. Red Bull, Parts Unlimited, Ducati North America, BMW-Ducati of Charlotte, and US DESMO all agreed to help in some way--either financially or in support functions. Larry's efforts yielded an air-conditioned tent with six big-screen

TVs, a continental breakfast, a BBQ lunch, door prizes, and lots of track time. We had 103 riders pre-registered, and most of them managed to stay on two wheels. The real treat was that Larry was able to do all this and

still have \$3,000 left over to donate to Road Racing World Action Fund for Air Fences.

After a full day of riding on the track, we adjourned to the air-conditioned tent to enjoy some cold drinks and snacks. The real excitement came as we got to watch American Nicky Hayden's first win of a MotoGP race, and in front of his home crowd!! It was truly a fantastic day! All of us left the track with a smile on our faces. ⚡



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A grayscale map of the Appalachian region, showing parts of West Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. A stylized logo consisting of two overlapping, curved lines is superimposed on the map.

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# *The sweet, melodic sound of a Ducati...*



*Read the story of the Ducati guitar on page 12...*

# *The sweet, melodic sound of a Ducati...*



by Tom Truskolaski

...Guitar, that is. Is Ducati in the guitar business? No, but if they were, they would have built something very similar to this. This guitar is so appropriately called the “999.” Its Testastretta decals and performance logo are clear-coated in the custom Ducati-red paint, and the headstock is embossed with the Ducati logo. This technique, being very difficult to do, was carefully crafted by an artist named Sean Philbin.

This guitar was conceived back in March of this year. As I am a long-time guitar player and have an affinity for Ducati motorcycles, it clicked. With a box of high-quality parts just sitting around waiting to be assembled, I contacted Sean about the idea. I shipped him the bodywork and gave him some ideas of what I wanted. I told him I would be in the area come June, as I was headed to the Americade Rally in Lake George, New York. Sean responded, “No problem, plenty of time,” or so I thought.


Once Sean received the package, I let him be. I didn’t want to call on him, as he was busy and three months left plenty of time for completion. So I spent some time gathering the bits that I needed to complete the project once Sean was done. I bought a Paul Reed Smith pickup to replace the old EMG that was in the box. I replaced the old volume and tone controls that would have definitely caused an issue with noise in the system. The input jack was even replaced with a gold-anodized one. Nice touch, I thought. I used the old Hamer tuning gears and the very competent Floyd Rose tremolo system.

June arrived, and I set out with my truck and trailer with my BMW GS motorcycle in the back, as I had blown the engine a month before on my 916 at a Corner Speed track day at VIR. The Northeast US Desmo faction was having a ride on that Friday, and I was

sorely disappointed not to have my precious Duc with me. I met up with Ken Davis in Winchester, Virginia, and we trailered together to Americade. My drive took me from Radford, Virginia, to Scranton, Pennsylvania, as my first stop was to meet with Sean to pick up the finished product. Sean regretfully told me it wasn’t finished. He just kept putting it off and off until the last minute. He did say it was nearing completion, but he wasn’t sure I would have it by the time I left for Americade.

Tuesday came, and sure enough I headed for New York without the instrument. I was feeling a little down but not out, as I was going to see friends that get together perhaps twice a year but always for our yearly ritual in the Adirondack Mountains. Lifelong friendships were made here and continue to thrive as our passion for motorcycles keeps us all together. For twelve years running, I have attended this wonderful place in upstate New York. These guys are some of the best friends that I could ever ask for. And the riding there—what is understood doesn’t need to be discussed. I know many of you have similar stories of bonding with friends and motorcycles that will last a lifetime. It’s truly what makes this sport so wonderful.

The weather cooperated perfectly without any rain, although temperatures topped 90 degrees and included all the humidity. But we didn’t let that deter our good time. Thursday came around, and, much to my surprise, Sean showed up with the Ducati guitar all shiny and polished. It was quite a nice surprise to cap off another outstanding year in upstate New York.

Philbin’s Body and Paint Shop is located in Scranton, Pennsylvania, the heart of the anthracite-coal-mining region. Sean paints motorcycles, cars, boats, and guitars and can be reached at 570-346-2161. 



# AMERICAN MOTORCYCLE ASSOCIATION'S VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE DAYS

## *Featured Marque Ducati*

Last year, several of us went to the AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days to see what it would be like. Word on the street was that Ducati would be the featured brand for 2005, and we were trying to get a handle on what it would take to help make that happen. All right, it was an excuse for a road trip! Six days and 1,900 miles later (who says you cannot tour on a Ducati 900 SS?), we knew where we would be in July 2005!

For 2005, I had to drive my car to help at the Ducati Rally booth and be prepared to showcase our club along with various other Desmo Owners Clubs. I did trailer up my 1998 Ducati 916 to have for riding around and for leading the Saturday group ride. I also brought along a very large cooler filled with bags of potato chips. No, they did not need to be kept cool, but Ducati North America wanted a large cooler and donations for the potluck dinner Saturday night. It just made sense to use the cooler to keep the chips from being crushed by all the other things in the car. A few of my friends who were riding up came by and dropped off a few changes of clothes so they could travel lighter.

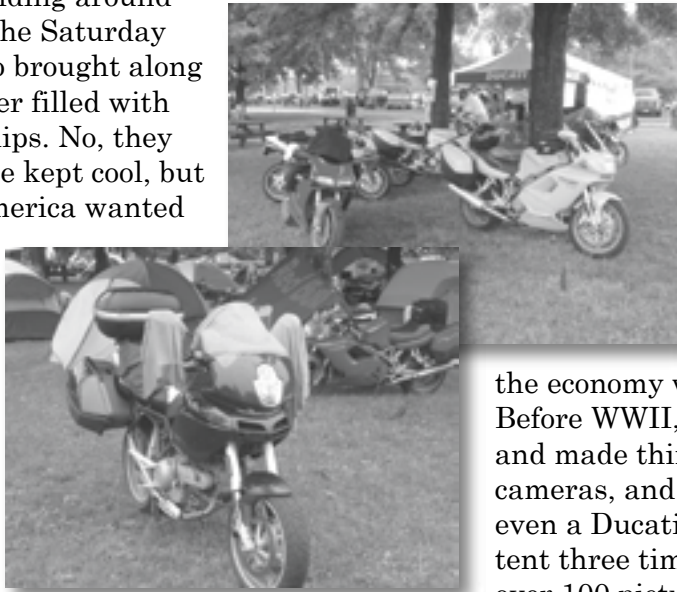
The weather on Thursday morning was not very inviting, and the weather forecast for the entire weekend had rain probability higher than 60% for all four days of the rally. This was not what I had hoped for, but at least it made me feel a little better about driving rather than riding up. I headed straight for the track and got there shortly after lunch. I got my ticket at the gate and headed for Ducati Rally Central at the top

of the hill in the infield. Kristina Snyder was already there and was busy setting up the tents and easy-ups for the rally headquarters. Right across the dirt road from Rally headquarters was DesmOhio and down to the left was MADOG (Mid-America Ducati Owners Group). US DESMO was in good company.

Friday, the crowds started to arrive in earnest. A trip down to the Ducati Museum tent showed they were not totally ready for visitors, but if the bikes that were there were any indication, this was going to be quite a showcase of Ducatis. The title "Zero to 999" gives you an idea what was in store for us. Of course there were the Cucciolo, Mariana, Monza, and other famous singles from the early period of Ducati, but what was amazing was the display of pre-war Ducati products. Many do not realize that Ducati got into the motorcycle business only at the behest of the Italian government to help stimulate the economy with inexpensive transportation. Before WWII, they were Ducati Electronica and made things like radios, radio parts, cameras, and electric shavers. There was even a Ducati outboard motor! I went to the tent three times over the weekend and took over 100 pictures! I was impressed.

Back up on the hill where Ducati Rally Central was located, things started to pick up. Those who pre-registered got a nice T-shirt and goody bag. Those who showed up later to register got some of these items if there were any left. What really stood out was all the Ducatis parked in the rain next to tents. This was a real Ducati rally, with riders coming long distances and still camping. Common knowledge would tell you only BMW and Moto Guzzi riders would do such a thing. It made me proud to see the number of Ducati fans who showed up despite

*Continued on page 16...*









the weather to see the racing and the museum and to participate in the rally.


Mid-Saturday morning, we formed a little group of intrepid Ducatisti and headed out for a ride in the Ohio countryside. It was hot and humid. The sky looked like it would rain at any minute, but we set out anyway. Our ride group was about fifteen strong and hopeful for a nice ride. What we found was that if the road was straight, then it was dry and you had to follow an SUV. But if the road had nice turns and no traffic, then it was wet—wet enough to see a rooster tail off the tire of the bike in front of you! We did stop on a picturesque road at a dam and took some pictures. On our return trip, it started to darken up, so we picked up the pace and made it back to the track entrance still dry and happy. The problem was that it was still almost a half mile in heavy traffic once you get inside the track to make it back to Ducati Rally Central. It is amazing how wet you can get in such a short trip!

Part of the rally package was several door-prize tickets. Would you believe I won? When I went to see what I had won, it was a free pass to a US DESMO rally! Seeing as that is our own club and I attend all the rallies anyway, I passed on it and let someone else have that door prize. Maybe I will have better luck with the lottery. The good news was that someone in South Carolina won the free US DESMO track day, so it will be put to good use.

Saturday night was the potluck dinner for the Ducati clubs. Each club and member was asked to supply part of the dinner. It worked out fine, and we even had leftovers! It was Vicki Smith's (Ducati Online) birthday, and she was presented a large cake with what looked like more than 21 candles. I was sure she said she was only 21? J Happy Birthday was sung to her by the large group led by none other than the famous Ducati tuner Reno Leoni and Ducati's

Engineering Director Gianluigi Mengoli, as well as many others whose names I cannot remember. DesmOhio provided Ohio corn (what else did you expect?), and it was the best corn on the cob I have had in a long time. There is a rumor I ate five ears, but don't believe it. The festivities lasted late into the night, but I did not stay that late. I do not see all that well at night any more and wanted to get back to the hotel before it got completely dark.

Sunday morning when I returned, you could see some very full trash cans. It was clear by the volume of beverage containers that a good time was had by all. The rally really started to wind down as tents were being folded and mounted on the bikes. I did get to walk through the pits and see the vintage race bikes. AHRMA has expanded their racing classes, and some very modern Ducati twins were out there racing. I never did make it past the pits and on to the swap-meet section. Based on the amount of money friends were spending there, it was most likely a very good thing.

The weather for the rally was not all that good. It was hot and very humid. It would rain and the temperature would drop only a little, but the humidity would go through the ceiling. It was even uncomfortable in the mornings. It was hotter back in North Carolina, but the humidity was a lot less and it was more easily tolerated. During my drive back, I was rained on hard several times, and I was glad that I was in the car. What a wonderful event. I am so glad Ducati North America got involved with this event and got out with the masses who buy their bikes. It showed willingness on their part to support their customers and the club concept. It also allowed them an opportunity to meet the Ducatisti and see what they were doing to their bikes and what problems or needs they had. The closer these two groups become, the more closely Ducati's products will reflect what we want. 





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## PART III: FLORIDA SOJOURN

BY CRAIG HUNLEY

Alone. I felt alone. It was the final Sunday of Bike Week, and everybody was leaving Daytona. The 200, the big motorcycle race Bike Week grew up around, had been postponed due to rain that would not stop. All the Bike Week festivities were over. Italian Bike Night was over. The Wood's Auction was over. The manufacturers' tents were closed. Calandro, my travel partner, had taken off two days earlier to return to North Carolina. Everyone had cleared out of Bulow Campground on Sunday morning. The last person I knew had just left Daytona International Speedway. Now it was just me, the rain, and a bike that would not start.

I geared up, put the key in the ignition, hit the starter, and nothing happened. Did I mention that it was raining? Did I mention that everyone I knew had already gone? The track was fast emptying of all human life except for the "ever-helpful" DIS security personnel. It probably took me 20 minutes of wondering what to do next before I checked the kill switch. Of course, that was the problem, and the Darmah started right up.

I needed to go somewhere to get out of the weather. There was a sleazy little motel on the beach at Daytona that a buddy and I had discovered one year when at the 24 Hours of Daytona. Charles and I had preceded the rest of our group for the annual pilgrimage to the big sports car endurance race. We rode down Atlantic Avenue in Daytona Beach looking for a room, saw a little motel, stopped in, and asked the proprietor how much for a night. He quoted \$17 for one person and \$19 for two. This motel was on the beachfront in downtown Daytona

and only three blocks north from the pier. With a price that cheap, you can imagine the quality of the accommodations. However, all the roaches were dead, and Charles and I became so enamored with the "charm" of the place that we stayed there for years to come. Needing shelter, I headed for the motel.

The weatherman called this kind of winter coastal storm a "nor'easter." My room was beachfront and included a view of the Daytona Beach pier. The nor'easter was significant enough that the Weather Channel sent a reporter to Daytona. I could look out the window, see the weather channel reporting from the beach in front of the pier, turn on the TV, and see the same reporter talking. It rained hard for 36 hours, and most of the rain was horizontal. As a result, DIS announced the 200 was postponed until the following weekend.

I spent the day and a half of rain reading the history of racing at Daytona. Daytona, the World Center of Racing, the Birthplace of Speed. Whether you like Daytona or not, you have to respect the tradition of motorsports in the town. Speed records were set on the beach at Daytona before the first motorcycle races were held on the Isle of Man. Daytona was hosting record speed attempts a decade before the first Indianapolis 500. LeMans, Monaco, and all the other great European races were still years away. For this reason, Daytona holds a certain reverent position among knowledgeable motorsports fans.

Before leaving Daytona, I had some business to complete. My marriage separation papers had

finally been completed. In order to avoid a delay in their execution, I had the documents sent to a Mail Boxes Etc. in Daytona. Mail Boxes provided me with a notary and a way to return the documents. It was all I needed to complete the transaction. For years I bragged about finalizing my divorce at the World Center of Racing, the Birthplace of Speed.

While at Mail Boxes, I also shipped my camping gear home. It was too troublesome to pack and unpack all the camping gear each day. After the nor'easter soaked my sleeping bag, I decided to use motels for the rest of the trip.

Before the storm, camping at Bulow Camp-ground had been fun. The temperatures approached record lows for the date, but that did not slow the huge gathering of bikers. Entertainment went well into the night. The choices were either watching burnouts or wet T-shirt contests. Also while at Bulow, I "fall tested" the Darmah. Trying to ride off without remembering to remove a disk lock just doesn't work. Fortunately, the soft sand of the camp-ground caught the Darmah without any damage.

The rain had stopped, and my business was completed. I had five days before the rescheduled Daytona 200 was to be held. It was time to explore. The first stop was Personal Cycle Service. Having heard of Tony Foster and PCS, I went there and visited while Tony changed the Darmah's oil. Tony had a shop full of Italian eye candy, including several bevel-drives. Right beside PCS was Willi's Museum. It is too bad this museum is now closed. Willi's was not the equal of the Barber museum, but it had an impressive collection of rare, old Italian motorcycles.

After leaving Daytona, the Darmah and I traversed Florida to visit Syd's Cycles in St. Petersburg. Syd's was and remains one of the few shops that focuses on bevel-drive Ducatis. They gave me a free T-shirt for visiting. From St. Pete, it was down the Gulf Coast of Florida to Naples and Marco Island. Then I traveled back across Florida by riding through the Everglades toward Miami.

The trip through the Everglades on the Tamiami Trail was different. Marsh grasses

and drainage canals were on both sides of the highway. Airboats and old tires were on the canal banks. Wait a minute. Those are not discarded tires. Those are alligators. From a moving motorcycle, the texture and color of alligators on the banks looks like old tires.

After the Everglades, I rode to Key West, the southernmost point in the United States. It was a pleasurable ride down the Keys in warm, temperate weather. Near Marathon there was a loud clunk. The clunk was the Darmah's center stand dropping to the road. Every day something happened to the motorcycle. Small, repairable, or non-essential things broke. Maybe a light would burn out or a cable would come loose, but daily there was some issue that required attention. This forced me to be resourceful and deal with the problems. Today's issue was the center stand falling off.

Key West was hopping with activity. Spring break had started, and the college students were in town. I felt a bit out of place but lingered around long enough to take an ultralight plane ride over the ocean. Technically it was a lesson, not a ride. Apparently there was a law against taking passengers on ultralight rides for profit. The local entrepreneurs circumvented the law by taking people up for lessons instead. The ultralight flight was worth doing just for the view down through the clear and colorful Caribbean waters.

With the weekend approaching, it was time to leave South Florida and return to Daytona for the rescheduled 200. I spent the night at a Miami motel on the way back up the Atlantic Coast. In the morning, I placed my saddlebags beside the bike and walked into the motel office to grab a bagel. My plan was to eat the bagel while strapping on the saddlebags, but the saddlebags disappeared! In 60 seconds some low life had stolen my luggage. He got my dirty clothes, toiletries, books, eyeglasses, and a rainsuit. The thief got nothing of marketable value, but lots of stuff that I needed. I was furious, but after talking to the police decided there was little that could be done. At least my tank bag and riding gear were not missing too.

The next stop was Ft. Lauderdale and Action Sport Cycles. There I bought some Ducati-logo

wear to replace some of the clothes the thief got. After leaving Action Sport Cycles, I was stopped at a waterway waiting for the drawbridge to come down. A guy beside me in a convertible Benz struck up a conversation. He said, "While you are looking around, you should go a few miles down the coast road and check out the nude beach." Okay, why not? Never been to a nude beach before. I am willing to bet the nude sunbathers never saw a guy walking down their beach in leathers before either. Most entertaining!

Due to the distractions of the day, it was late when I left the Ft. Lauderdale area. Before long, it was dark, and I had many more miles to travel. Still, I felt good. The Darmah was eating up the interstate. We should make Daytona that night. Daytona was familiar ground. After touring Florida, returning to Daytona felt like going home. Two thousand miles of riding were behind me. Things had been soaked in rain, things had broken, things had fallen off, and things had been stolen, but the Darmah and I were still rolling up the highway. I felt confident. Then the Darmah started losing power.

It was on an undeveloped portion of interstate north of Cape Canaveral when the Darmah started losing power. The bike felt like it was running out of gas. Slowly it lost speed. I turned the petcocks to reserve. No change. I moved to the shoulder of the road and tried to keep moving hoping to make it to the next exit. The engine died. I fiddled with the petcocks some more. The engine would not restart. There was no exit or anything else in sight, and it was dark. Quite humbling. I did not feel very confident anymore. I hit the starter again, and the Darmah fired up.

By the time I got to the first available exit off the interstate, the Darmah was losing power

again. I pulled into a convenience store and while there filled up with gas. After filling up, the bike would not start. What was it?

I suspected the plugs were fouling due to the bike's 400-mile-to-the-quart appetite for oil. Naïve as I was, I had failed to pack a spark plug wrench. The convenience store was the only place at the interchange, and they had nothing to offer. But wait, there was a dirt bike rider playing in a field across the street. He probably had a tool kit on his bike. So I went chasing off after him, but the guy never turned around, and he could not hear my yells over his smoking engine. I never have liked the sound of two-strokes.



Back to the drama at the Darmah. What to do next? Drink a Coke and contemplate. Hit the starter one more time just in case... and the Darmah fires up.

Wonderful! Somebody up there does love me. Hastily, I geared up while making sure not to let the engine die, and off we went. The bike ran fine the rest of the night on the way to Daytona. What the problem had been I will never know. My guess is it was all about learning humility.

The next morning, the first stop was at a parts house for a plug wrench and fresh spark plugs. Then on to Daytona International Speedway to watch the 200 and its colorful supporting activities. The paddock was bustling with last-minute race-team preparations and umbrella girls. Ferracci was still competing with a Ducati race team, and that gave me someone to pull for. Scott Russell won of course. Duhamel was second. Between the parade lap and the race there had been a short delay. A number of the riders took advantage of the opportunity to make a quick run to the restroom. Pascal Picotte was a little less patient than the others and just ran behind a palm tree to relieve himself.

When the race was over, I headed north toward home. Rainy weather was again moving



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in, and the thief in Miami had my rainsuit. Fortunately, I had good friends in Savannah who took me in. By Monday, I was ready to continue traveling home, but it was still raining. Of course, most motorcycle shops are closed on Mondays. That Monday, the only open motorcycle business in Savannah was a Harley Davidson shop. I bought the cheapest rainsuit they had and put up with the Harley logo for several years before trashing it.

On the way back to Charlotte and when almost home, the Darmah's tachometer failed. Since the speedometer cable had already failed, there was no way to determine my speed. The timing of the tach breakage seemed appropriate. The Darmah waited until the trip was almost over

before denying me this important information. Every day there had been some challenge, but the Darmah provided what was necessary to get me home.

The 2700-mile trip on this old Italian motorcycle was more than a trip to Daytona. It was a rite of passage into motorcycling. It was a development of self-sufficiency and a restoration of confidence after a failed marriage. It was a bonding of man and motorcycle. Never ever in the succeeding years has the Darmah failed to bring me home. Components fail regularly, but the Darmah gets me there. There are six bikes in the garage. I love them all, but if I had to get down to just one bike, it would be the Darmah. 

*Postscript: After returning from Florida, the author's love affair with Italian motorcycles has continued to flourish. Now, nine years later, he operates Appalachian Tours, which offers vintage-bike tours of the southeastern mountains.*


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*BENCH RACING continued from page 28...*

appears they were all waiting for the first person to brake so they could out-brake him!

Now things were really getting interesting. The first rider did not even lean the bike over but just headed for a space between the hay bales and stopped inside the upper part of the chicane. The second rider tried to lean for the turn but gave up after a few yards and then went for the hay bales. Unfortunately for him there were no more slots; the hay bales exploded, and he disappeared from view in a haze of flying straw! The third rider did a little better and made most of the turn before striking the hay with his right side and then careening

left and off the track. Rider number four made the left but never turned right and continued off into the infield. Somehow I had just passed four riders by letting them out-brake me for a turn! Not a bad day's work if you can get it.

The next day when I looked at the local paper, there was rider number two as he passed through the hay bales. You can see the hay bales exploding and the bike making its way to the infield. And there in front of the bike, sitting just like he was still on it, is the rider. The problem is, he is still traveling at some velocity, with his feet and arms pointing forward just like they were still on the pegs and handlebars! 

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## Schedule of Remaining Events for 2005

### September 30-October 2

Ducks Fly South (DFS) Rally - Hiawassee, Georgia.

### Monday, October 17

Track Day - Carolina Motorsports Park, Kershaw, South Carolina.

### Monday, November 21

Track Day - Roebling Road, Savannah, Georgia.

Summer 2005 (Dates and Location TBA) — Track Days, New Hampshire International Speedway - NH

Pocono Track Days — (Dates TBA), Pennsylvania

# MINI MOTO 888



by Mike Porter (as told to Jim Calandro)

For the past twenty years, “TWO”—Two Wheels Only—has hosted a 50-cc rally in its Suches, Georgia location. It started out as a small gathering of mini bikes and scooters, but over the years it progressed and became a fundraiser for the local volunteer fire department. Riders would seek sponsors to help contribute money for the fire department while they made their 75-mile run through the hills of north Georgia. Because this event is timed to occur about the same time as Halloween, riders began wearing costumes. Even Elvis has made an appearance!

As the years and the event have progressed, many of the participants began to customize their bikes in order to try to make them resemble bigger bikes that they either owned or wished they owned. Not being immune to this, I began to think that my Yamaha YSR 50 needed to change its look. Being the proud owner of a 1993 Ducati 888, there was really only one way for me to go. My first attempt was strictly cosmetic as I painted the little Yamaha a nice shade of Ducati red, blacked out the wheels, and added a white number plate. The results were great, but there was something lacking: the Ducati sound! The process was not complete.

After a few years of running the two-stroke motor, the big decision was reached that a suitable four-stroke motor needed to be found. A couple of Honda 70-cc motors were located, and after a long and hard inspection it appeared this “Frankenbike” could be made. A mini V-twin was in the planning stages. After some more detailed planning, the cases were cut, machined, and welded to form the basis of this motor. Next the crank needed to be machined and fitted to make the 90-degree V-twin motor. Many assemblies and disassemblies later, things started to look like they would work. It was beginning to come together! This motor has been together and apart so many times, you would swear it has a number-50 zipper installed! ☺

Next came the careful process of stuffing this new 90-degree V-twin into a frame it was never intended to occupy. A new exhaust system had to be fabricated and installed. Again, nothing like this gets done right the first time, so it must be done over and over. After a careful check to make sure everything was assembled correctly and was in working order, it was time for the big test. Would it start? I fired the motor, and when it cranked and then ran, I could not contain myself! I jumped for joy! Many hours and dreams had come to fruition. How could I not be excited?

Now comes the hard part: all the details. This is that period when you are so close yet so far from the goal. Patience gets harder to maintain as time marches on. The carburetors and timing must be fine-tuned and everything assembled and placed in the right location to make it look like its inspiration. My goal is to have it finished and ready to display at “Ducati Corner” at the Road Atlanta AMA Superbike race. I hope you can stop by and see my creation if you make it to the race.

*This article was written by Jim Calandro as told to him by Mike Porter.*

*Mike is a long-term motorcycle fanatic and lives in Mobile, Alabama. In the 48 years he has been riding, he has owned over 400 motorcycles! Currently he has 16 bikes, including a 1981 Ducati, 1949 BMW R-24, Hercules rotary, 1958 Moto Guzzi, several other Ducks, and an Ariel Leader. Mike retired two years ago and apparently has way too much time on his hands. This mini is quite a tribute to Ducati. It is nice to know Mike is getting in some serious riding now that he is retired, and he recently completed a road trip to Pennsylvania that included an 18-hour jaunt of 1,260 miles! Mike still does some motorcycle powder coating and is a full-time tinkerer. 🛠️*

*Turn the page to see the pictures...*

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# BENCH RACING

Tall tales of fact and "friction"

## DAYTONA

*By il Capo Jim Calandro*

Daytona is one of those tracks that for some reason has more pulling power to it than any other place I have been. It is not a technical track and usually horsepower is the determining factor, but the banking has such a seductive nature that who can resist? Way back in my midlife I had the obligatory crisis and decided to race. Now I have always thought it was a coincidence that Kenny Roberts retired that year, but who knows?

I started out at small regional tracks, but when I heard I could get onto the track at Daytona, I signed up. It was impressive enough to just be there, but to actually be allowed past the pit fence and then the pit wall was way out there. In my first practice session, we went out into the infield, and, getting caught up in the concentration of the track, I did not even think about how we were going to get up onto the banking. As we made the last left from the infield, there it was. It looked like we were going to run into a wall!

I just gritted my teeth, and, after the heart-stopping bump in the middle of the turn, I made the transition onto the banking. It is a sharp jolt, but the little 550 Suzuki I was riding was not all that fast—neither am I for that matter—and the transition was OK. Now came the exciting part. The banking is 31 degrees, and I am told you cannot stand on it as it is too steep. Entering the banking at 80-mph, you need a lean for that speed and radius of turn that is not 31 degrees. The problem is, you now have an artificial horizon that makes it appear that you are leaning right in a left-hand turn. For some reason, it is hard for your brain to accept this and furthermore communicate the command to accelerate to your right hand!

It took my second time around and all my courage to hold the throttle open, and the faster I went, the better it looked. After a few practice sessions, we lined up for our race. They did not trust the amateurs to start on pit road and make the pit-road entrance onto the track, so instead they started us on an access road that led into the straight that leads to the International Horseshoe. The flag dropped, and away we went. I managed a fantastic unintentional wheelie that ensured my mid-pack position. We started to settle into a pecking order that was mostly determined by horsepower. I ended up in a group of five similar bikes: four Suzukis like mine and a Kawasaki.

Everything was fine until we were on the back straight heading for the chicane. I was the last of five bikes and was marveling at the view of our freight train. As we approached the brake markers for the chicane, I noticed my speed was over 130 mph; I had only seen 125 mph in my practice sessions as I had been running alone. Now it occurred to me that I was unsure of my braking point at this speed. It also dawned on me that I had even less of an idea where the rider in front of me would brake! As we passed the first brake marker, I decided I would move to his right a little so I could see his right hand and make sure we braked together.

During all this planning, I noticed that the number THREE brake marker had just passed by. Now this may not mean much to you or the rider in front of me, but it was my marker for 125 mph! I decided I did not know what anyone else was going to do, but I was out of here. I sat up and grabbed my front brake lever. Funny thing, so did everyone else in front of me. It

*Continued on page 24...*

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