

Robb Report

2008 Road Tests » Ducati & Kawasaki

MOTORCYCLING

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The Bulldog Unleashed

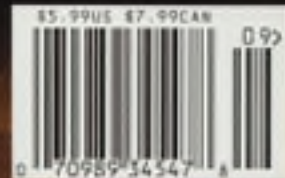
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Simplify, Simplify

And the gods proclaimed, "Let it be light!"



By Jeff Buchanan » Tucked in behind the windscreen of the NCR Millona One Shot, rapidly reeling in blurring pavement on the steep banking of Fontana's California Speedway, my peripheral vision caught the flashing red shift indicator light. Having not counted the shifts and traveling at this speed, I assumed all the available gears had been exhausted. Out of curiosity, I chopped the throttle for a millisecond and tapped the shifter. My inquisitiveness revealed that sixth gear was still virgin territory. The tachometer dropped a few digits and began another climb to redline as the Millona's distinctive exhaust note reverberated off the bleachers of the unpopulated speedway.

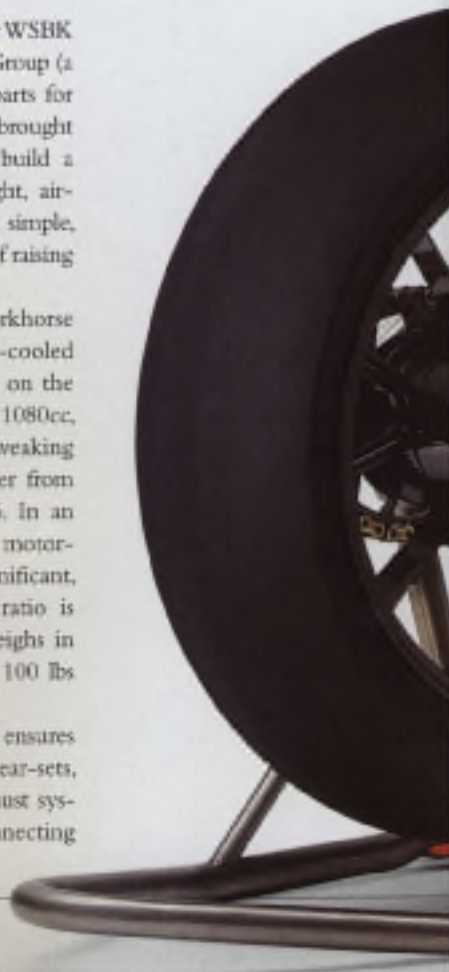
This was track day heaven—up on the banking, tucked in, tapped out, experiencing the sensation of centrifugal force before dropping back onto the infield section of the circuit for another round. The fact that the motorcycle delivering this euphoria was a stripped down, air-cooled machine devoid of radiators, hoses, fans and a water pump, drove home Henry David Thoreau's famous adage: "simplify, simplify."

NCR is a Bologna-based legendary Italian racing outfit with a rich history of building

ultra-quick Ducatis and fielding a major WSBK team. Partnering with The Poggipolini Group (a manufacturer specializing in titanium parts for F1 and MotoGP), the two companies brought their collective expertise together to build a high-performance, extremely lightweight, air-cooled racing machine. The result is a simple, compact and sleek motorcycle capable of raising the hair on the back of the neck.

At the heart of the Millona is a workhorse Multistrada-sourced Ducati 1000DS air-cooled L-twin engine. NCR works its magic on the normally docile engine, boring it out to 1080cc, shaving 29 pounds off the unit and tweaking the combustion process to boost power from around 90 horsepower (stock) to 116. In an era of 180+ horsepower production motorcycles, that number may not sound significant, until the Millona's power-to-weight ratio is taken into account. The One Shot weighs in at a feathery 275 pounds—more than 100 lbs lighter than a Ducati 999.

NCR's affiliation with Poggipolini ensures exquisite bits and pieces of exotica. Rear-sets, brake and shift pedals, under-seat exhaust system, rear sprocket, clutch cover, connecting



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rods, valves and all bolts and fasteners are titanium. Engine covers are magnesium, created with state-of-the-art rapid prototyping for an exact fit.

Carbon fiber abounds. The fuel tank, fairing, subframe, belly pan, front fender, tail section and airbox are all fabricated from the aerospace material, as are the brake and oil lines. Ferrari engineers helped design the intake ducts, achieving massive, efficient airflow.

The tubular trellis frame is fabricated by NCR in chromium molybdenum for lightweight strength. Inverted 43mm-diameter Öhlins forks benefit from a TiN (titanium nitride) surface treatment to reduce stiction and increase surface hardness. The rear suspension system is an aluminum swing-arm, with cantilevered progressive linkage, mounted to an Öhlins shock. A clever concentric cam adjuster on the bottom shock mount allows progressive or digressive action adjustment. A Ducati Corsa close ratio six-speed transmission with lightened gears is mated to an APTC (Adler Power Torque Plate Clutch) slipper clutch. Brembo SBK brake calipers—the gold standard—are radial-mounted and mated to dual 300mm Braking WAVE rotors for superior stopping power.

An exceedingly tall first gear makes getting underway from a dead stop a bit tricky, necessitating some finesse with the throttle and clutch. The lightened flywheel and pistons give the Millona crisp, snappy throttle response. The big twin pulls like a draft horse in the lower ranges, allowing

for long rolls of the throttle between gearshifts. The power comes on with customary L-twin predictably. Near redline, there is definitely some vibration, though it feels more like an affirmation of velocity than inconvenience.

The Millona's light weight and narrow profile, combined with the NCR race-inspired chassis, is highly maneuverable yet extremely stable. The absence of significant mass renders the feel more like that of a 250cc machine than a 1000cc superbike, with direction changes and turn-in initiated effortlessly. Other bikes feel heavy and slow handling in comparison.

Despite sacrificing the calf of my right boot, which melted against a section of exhaust pipe snaking up behind the foot peg, my time aboard the NCR One Shot was exhilarating.

There are three versions of the Millona available, the base S model, the slightly breathed-on R, and the top of the line One Shot, which has all the bells and whistles. Each Millona is built to order, allowing the customer to shape everything to his personal taste and needs. In its bright orange livery, with the famous NCR coyote mascot hand-painted on the fairing, the One Shot cuts an impressive stance. As either a serious race machine or a sublimely fun mount for track days, the Millona offers stellar performance with the simplicity and novelty of air-cooling. **M**

SPECS

NCR Millona One Shot

ENGINE:
Ducati 1000DS air cooled,
L-twin, two-valve

POWER:
116 hp @ 7600 rpm

WEIGHT:
275 lbs (claimed, dry)

WHEELS:
Marchesini M10R
Forged Magnesium


TIRES:
Front: Metzeler Racetec
Slick KD, 120/70 R 17
Rear: Metzeler Racetec
Slick KD, 190/55 R 17

FRONT BRAKE:
Dual 4-piston, 2-pad Brembo
SBK radial calipers and
300mm Braking WAVE rotors

REAR BRAKE:
2-piston Brembo caliper and
200mm Braking WAVE rotor

SUSPENSION:
Front: Öhlins 43mm
inverted fork
Rear: Öhlins shock with
progressive linkage

CHASSIS:
Chromium molybdenum
tubular trellis with handmade
aluminum swingarm



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POWER
COMES
on with
customary
L-twin
predictability.

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100
100
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