

MOTORBIKES

The Yezdi 350

by SURESH GUPTAN

If Rodgers and Hammerstein were motorcycle nuts, their famous song may well have been titled 'There's Nothing like a Twin'. But take heart. Now there's hope at last for the thousands of you who are astride Yezdi 250cc 'Road-

ance. And an engine with an extra cylinder...

With the introduction of their Yezdi 350cc Twin (deliveries to begin from April), Ideal Jawa (India) Pvt Ltd gives up-market Indian motorcyclists an interesting new option. All that they

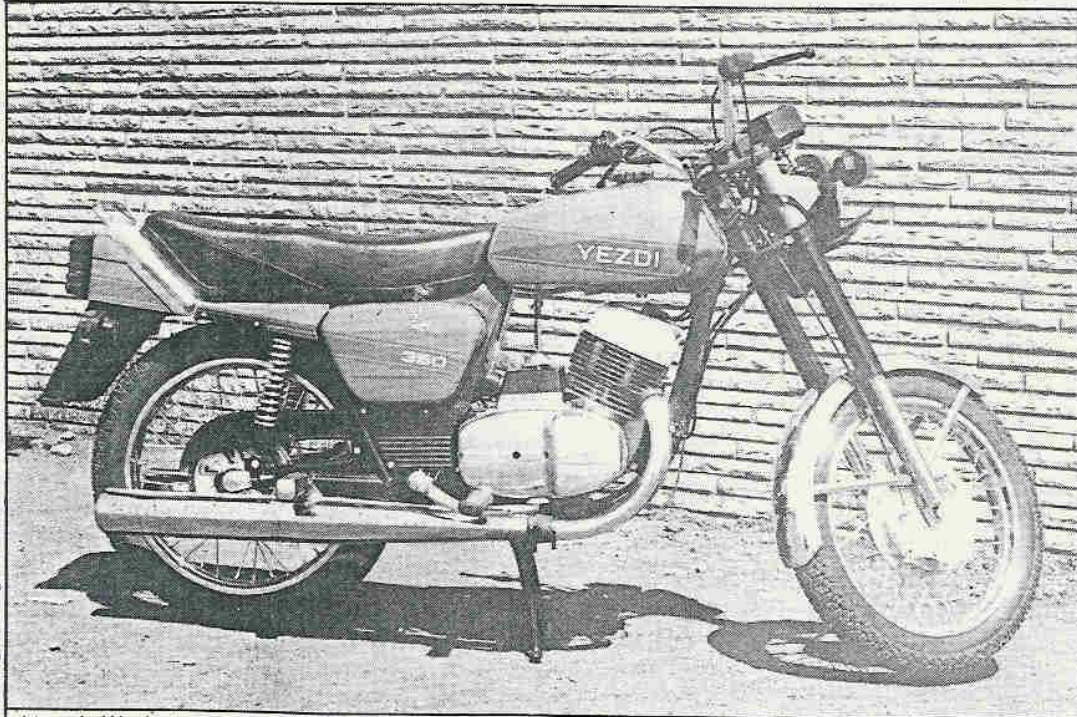
have really done is fit the larger imported engine on the basic—but slightly modified—250 Roadking frame. Except for a Heath Robinson-like rubber pad between engine bottom and frame to damp out vibrations, mounting arrangements are identical. At 65mm the stroke is nearly the same but the cylinder bore is reduced by 12mm to give a displacement of 343.47cc. Wheel diameters are two inches larger. Tyres fitted are 3.00 x 18 front and 3.25 (or optional 3.50) x 18 rear. The most striking feature, however, is an impressive conical alloy casting for a new front brake. It houses 8" twin leading shoe 'drum' type anchors. Then there is a 12 volt AC/DC electrical system, revised hand controls, smart new instrumentation, better silencers and a steering damper... But a strong family resemblance is retained. The four-speed gear-

box, foot levers, clutch assembly, front and rear suspension, rear brake, carburettor and side panels are all 'standard' Roadking components.

Styling changes are restricted to a slightly modified fuel tank with a new lid that mercifully clicks shut, a ribbed tail light and revamped rear end. Colours are flashier and prettier with contrast striping. Because the wider engine casing is not easily discernible I was stopped many times during testing by people with the curious query "...Modified Yezdi?!" When I explained that it was a new 'twin' all of them stepped back for a better look. Reactions ranged from "—Superb, really nice" to "So, so... the finish looks poor." But everyone raved over the new front brake that worked as well as it looked.

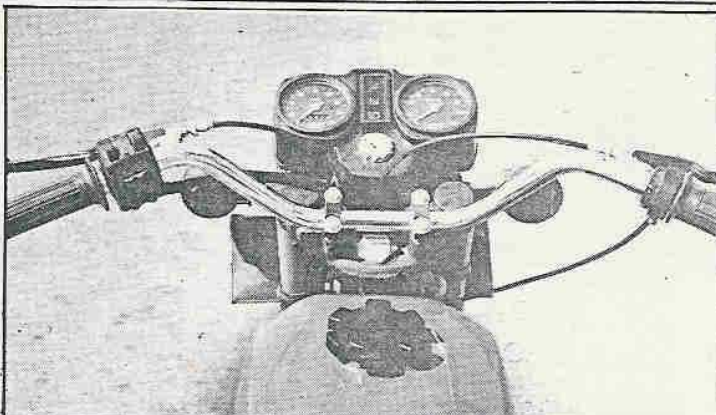
The addition of a 12 volt generator and a strong (45W/35W) headlight that is claimed to be 'as strong as that of a Maruti' removes one of the major bug-a-boos that had bedevilled the 250 Yezdi. Though this was progress it did make the battery indispensable. But my own Jawa has been running merrily for 20 years without one. Besides, this new 350 used up all the space in the left side compartment for its rectifier, regulator and mesh air intake. The tool kit has been relegated to an awkward spot under the seat. So with the battery and fuse living in the right hand compartment, the drawback was that when I took the bike to Juhu beach where I go jogging, I had no haven for my T-shirt and chappals...

On the road though, the bike was fun. Stepping up from the old 'single' the immediate sensation was of divine, silent, vibration-free progression. This, I thought, is what a Jawa ought to feel like. The acceleration may not be as impressive as that of its Japanese opposition. The Rajdoot 350 is a more refined machine with better quality castings and components, but this Yezdi is adequate. The old delight of heeling Jawas into bends and swinging through curves was intact and the added urge from its 25 horses made it delicious. Yet a 'super-bike' it is not. In fact 'adequate' is the key word to describe it. When I voiced doubts about the old front suspension's capacity to absorb



Photographs by the author.

kings'. We bet you are a little tired of the 'chung-chung-chung' two-stroke warble from its one-lunged engine. But for you, the 7-10bhp itty-bitsy 100cc bikes may have always looked too skinny; the ancient Bullet too agricultural... and the rorty Rajdoot-Yamaha 350 too temperamental and expensive. What you really yearned for was a more powerful brother to your 250cc machine. A stablemate with the same no-nonsense ruggedness, reliability and ease of mainten-





Manufacturers Dealer : Ideal (Jawa) Pvt Ltd, Mysore.
 : Ideal Motors, Bombay—The co-operation received in preparation and offer of the test-bike was a refreshing and welcome change from the tight-fisted attitudes of the dealers of the 100cc Japanese bikes.

Price as tested : Rs 21,700, inclusive of taxes, insurance, RTO fees, sari/crash guards and twin mirrors.

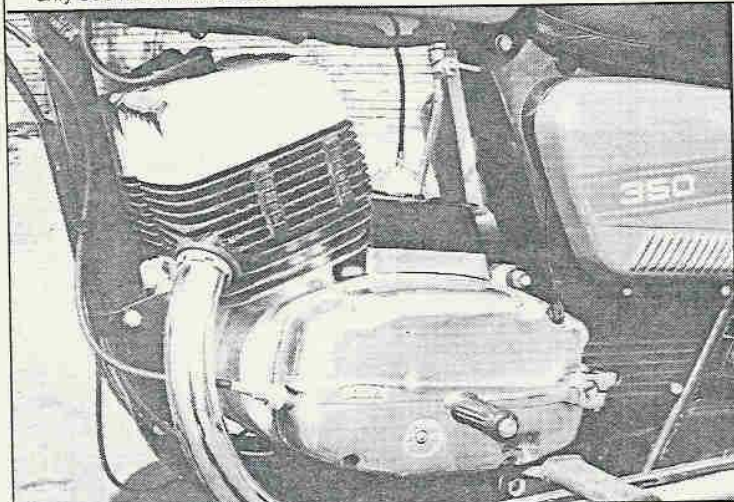
Condition of test bike : Brand new.
Test conditions : Warm and windy.
Tester : All the acceleration tests and maximum speed runs were done by Kishen Rao. Fuel consumption figures were taken by Suresh Gupta.

COMPARATIVE DATA ON THE INDIAN 350cc BIKES

	YEZDI 350	ROYAL ENFIELD BULLET (Super Star)	RAJDOOT-YAMAHA 350
Type of engine	2-stroke twin	4-stroke single	2-stroke twin
Bore/Stroke (mm)	58 x 65	70 x 90	64 x 54
No of carburettors	One	One	Two
Claimed horsepower	25 bhp at 4,500 rpm	18 bhp at 5,625 rpm	26.5 bhp at 5,000 rpm
Gearbox	4 speed	4 speed	6 speed
Brakes	8" drums front and rear (twin leading shoe type at front)	6" drums front and rear (leading/trailing type)	7" drums front and rear (twin leading type in front only)
Tyres	3.00x18 Front 3.25x18 Rear	3.25x19 Front 3.25x19 Rear	3.00x18 Front 3.50x18 Rear
Electrical system	12 Volts	12 Volts	12 Volts
Fuel tank capacity (litres)	15.0	14.5	16.0
Dry weight	152 kg	163 kg	150 kg
Payload	160 kg	250 kg	NA
Wheelbase	1350 mm	1372 mm	1320 mm
Claimed top speed	132 kmph	120 kmph	130 kmph
Fuel consumption at steady 50 kmph	30.0 kms/lit (as tested)	30-35 kms/lit (estimated)	22-25 kms/lit (estimated)
Price (on road)—incl. RTO fees, local taxes, twin mirrors, sari and crash guards	Rs 21,700/-	Rs 24,600/- (Standard model sells for about approx Rs 22,000/- but offers inferior switchgear and controls and 6V electricals)	Rs 25,850/- approx

	Solo	Two-up	Manufacturer's figures
Acceleration (Secs)			
0-60 kmph	4.64	6.53	
0-100 kmph	13.50	15.39	
Maximum Speed (Kmph)	120.00 (Average of two-way runs)		132.00
Fuel Consumption (Kms per litre)			
In traffic	26.00	20.00	
At steady 50 kmph	30.00	24.00	33.00
Acceleration through Gears (Secs)	II nd gear	III rd gear	IV th gear
30-50 kmph	2.79	5.61	13.77
50-70 kmph		4.85	8.63
70-90 kmph		5.47	8.62

Remarks: Maximum speed, acceleration, and fuel consumption figures could be expected to improve by 5%-10% as engine loosens up. It had run only 350 kms when tested.



the higher speeds and bumps. Kishen Rao, owner of a garage which deals only in big mobikes, and who helped me test this bike, reassured me that they were 'adequate'. And he should know, for he remembers sampling similar 350 twin Jawas about 30 years ago!

The same adjective also describes the turn indicators fitted the old-fashioned way—on

rigid mounts. (We, however, found the flasher unit to be an unreliable dud but were told that an improved electronic unit was being developed.) A vast improvement and supremely adequate too is the new tachocum-speedo instrument pod. With nice orange night illumination and lights for 'battery charging' 'neutral' and 'main beam' this is an asset to the

bike's looks. But the dog-leg hand levers and switch assembly still look and feel archaic. Once again 'adequacy' is the word that comes to mind. A novel and useful extra is a horn button that doubles as a headlight flasher for day or night overtaking... and after decades, this Yezdi has been given a steering damper.

With its basic engine design dating back to the '50s, and lack of features like a lube oil pump, electronic ignition or fancy rotary disc/reed valves this Yezdi 350 has no pretensions of being a 'modern' bike. Yet its 120 kmph top speed, 100 kmph cruiseability and 0-60 kmph in 4.64 seconds performance still commands attention. Its engine pokes out maximum power at a low, restful 4,500 rpm. At an indicated 80 kmph it spins at a lazy 3,000 revs and in the same IVth gear can potter along below 30 kmph in traffic! This low-speed capability and decent fuel consumption when added to the positive glamour of a 'twin'

makes it good competition for the other 350cc Indian-made bikes.

After three days and a few hundred kilometres on its saddle I would sum up this Yezdi as a decent buy for Rs 21,700 (which is the lowest price among comparable 350s). Whatever be their motivation, the philosophy of its cost-conscious manufacturer in upgrading a proven existing model while retaining a large percentage of interchangeable and easily available parts makes good sense today. Said Sheroy Irani (Chief Executive Officer, Ideal Jawa): "We guarantee the availability of spares everywhere." Of course, any up-to-date 250cc bike will probably beat this machine on almost all counts. But until an Indian manufacturer puts one of these into production, this Yezdi 350 may well carve out a niche of its own.