

BERINI SUPERSPORT 3

Centaur road tests an unusually sophisticated
Dutch moped with a brilliant engine

PREVIOUSLY marketed by Currys, the Berini moped makes a re-appearance in a striking new guise—the Super Sport 3—and is now distributed by Cotton, the motorcycle manufacturers, of Gloucester.

The Super Sport is certainly distinctive. Extensive fairing covers a majority of the engine, the mudguards are deeply valanced and of easily-recognisable angular shape, a futuristic headlamp forms part of a frontal nacelle which includes neatly faired handlebars, final drive is completely enclosed and an apparently capacious fuel tank conceals a tool compartment.

Apart from all this there are such conventional, yet desirable, items as a three-speed gearbox, a dual seat with pillion footrests, huge section tyres, sprung front and rear and excellent full-width hub brakes.

In many ways the performance matches up to what is admittedly, at first sight, an exotic exterior, and although there are certain points of criticism they do not by any means outweigh the many sterling qualities this machine possesses.

If I am to begin with the Berini's best feature it must surely be the engine. When I took this machine over there were relatively few miles on the clock and because of the exigencies of the testing schedule I had to gallop through my impressions at great speed. Consequently I had to treat the engine as if it were fully run in.

Powerful Performance

I was rewarded by a performance that suggested that the engine was run in. At very low revs. there was faint show of reluctance to work, but once this was passed the Pluvier power unit could be held at as high a rev. point as possible. Under these conditions the lengthy silencer gave off a yowl faintly reminiscent of a Honda "four" racing motorcycle, although not by any means as penetrating.

On one occasion, while turning on the power in second (which usually showed a maximum road speed of 27 m.p.h.) I inadvertently slipped back into first instead of top. The exhaust note was a shriek of protest, but apart from that there were no ill-effects—not even any excessive vibration. Top speed was very nearly 35 m.p.h., very commendable in view of my 230lb., while consumption worked out at about 125 m.p.h.

SPECIFICATION

Engine: Pluvier M35; 40mm bore x 38mm stroke = 48cc; effective power 2 b.h.p. at 4,500 r.p.m. Enconwi carburetter.

Gearbox: Three speed; primary drive; helical steel gears, secondary drive; chain. Gear ratios: 1st gear 1 : 33.8, 2nd gear 1 : 22.1, 3rd gear 1 : 14.5; pedal start; clutch operating in oil bath.

Frame: Pressed steel construction, telescopic front and rear suspension.

Tank: 3½ gallon, including a quart reserve.

Lights and Ignition: Direct lighting from fly-wheel magneto generator, 6v. 17w.

Wheels and Brakes: 23in. x 2in. x 2½in. tyres; front brake cable operated; rear brake pedal operated.

Equipment: Stand; number plates; spare jet for carburetter; speedometer; detachable "thief proof" petrol tap.

Finish: Red with chrome fittings.

Weight: 150lb.

Maximum load: 4½ cwt.

Concessionaires: E. Cotton (Motor Cycles) Ltd., Vulcan Works, Quay Street, Gloucester.
Price: £96.

after some rugged mileage.

The twist-grip gear-change could be a little inexact and it often proved necessary to line up the indicator grooves on the outside of the mechanism, visually. If this procedure was observed, very smooth changes resulted. Actually there was very little trouble in changing down once the correct amount of "twist" was applied and I often dropped from top to second very quickly when road conditions suddenly altered, without any thought at all.

Another thing I liked about the engine was that it started swiftly. The clearly marked tap on the offside was turned on, the small button on the throttle was depressed and the twist-grip was rotated in the reverse direction (enriching the mixture for starting) and it often only required one kick on the pedals to get things going. Once the throttle was opened the starting position was by-passed and could not be re-engaged until the button was again depressed.

Rider Comfort

The Berini offered a very comfortable ride. Sturdy dampers at the front and rear ironed out most of the bumps while the 23 x 2 x 2.25 in. balloon tyres dealt with everything else. A fine dual seat was somewhat spoiled by a strap which traversed its middle, and which the private owner would be well advised to remove for comfort. The Berini is designed for carrying a passenger and is well-equipped to do so.

At first the handlebars seem disconcertingly narrow and at very low speeds a certain amount of wobble does occur. Nevertheless once 10 m.p.h. or over has been attained, the Berini's progress is straight as a die, while on corners the handlebars come into their own, giving firm control without any tendency towards over-sensitivity.

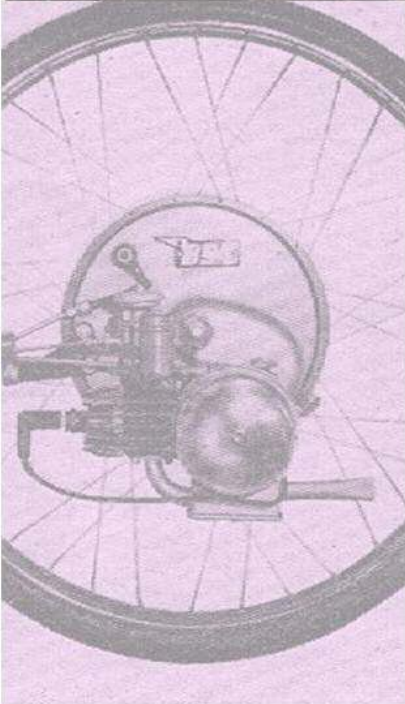
Both levers (front brake and clutch) are handily placed, as is the lights switch which is within easy reach of the left thumb. The fairing on top of the bars, merging with the headlamp nacelle and fork tops, makes everything admirably simple to keep clean. This factor is apparent throughout the whole of the moped.

I am no addict of back-pedal braking, but this system is almost inevitable on a multi-speeder if a complicated handlebar lay-out is to be avoided. The Berini back brake does its job reasonably well but in any case is little used. The front anchor is very potent and can be used in all but the more dire of emergency stops. Stopping distance from 20 m.p.h. was 11ft.

The riding position was not entirely suited to my 6ft. 1½in. since the straight bars caused me to support too much of my weight on my wrists. For a rider of more average height I think the position would be ideal and the only criticism would be the existence of the pedals which keep the feet in unsymmetrical positions.

Lighting was quite a bit better than average while the petrol tank tool container was both easy to open (by means of a small plastic knob) and close. The central stand did its job efficiently and resolutely refused to bottom despite sharp cornering.

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