

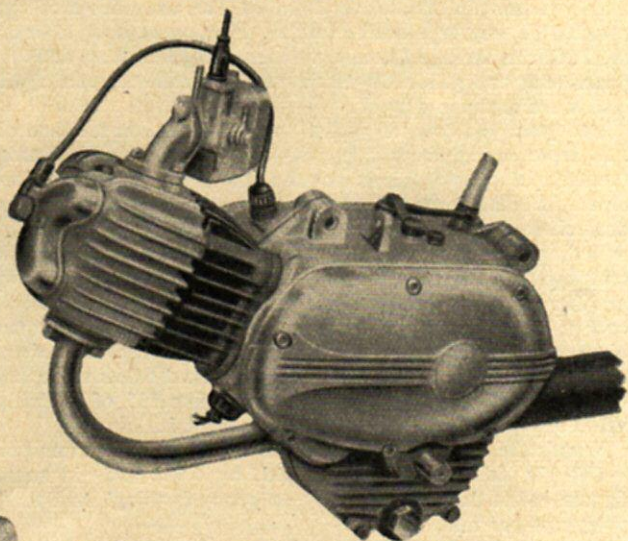
THREE years ago, holidaying, transportless, in Italy, a dealer acquaintance, more to get me off his heels than anything, loaned me a moped. It was obviously one of the works runabouts. Its white and grey paintwork was chipped and battered; dirt shrouded the exhaust and clogged the engine finning; the plug lead ended in bare wire twisted round the terminal; the controls seemed to the exploratory touch worn and sloppy. It had, ironically I thought, a flashing greyhound trademark on the dented fuel-tank.

Shipwrecked

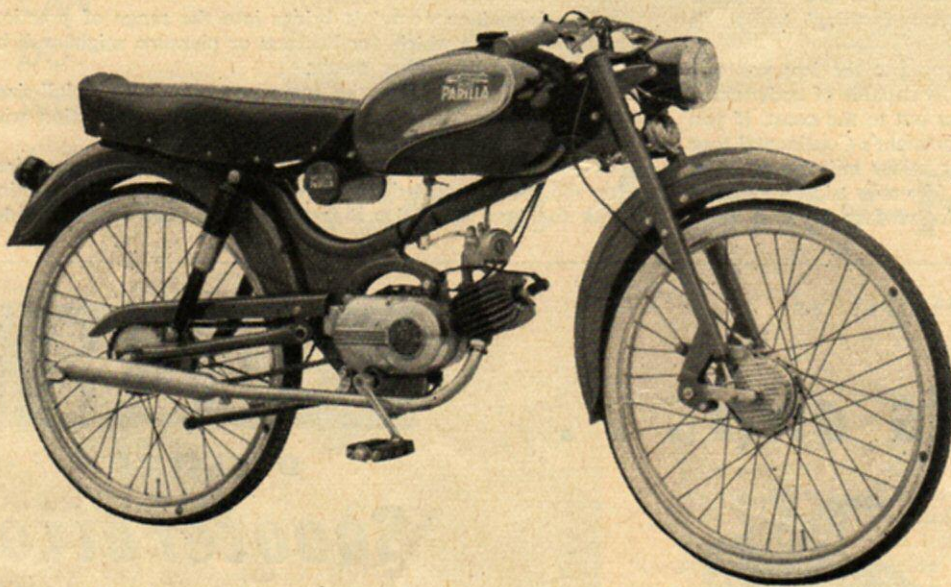
I couldn't refuse it, of course, but it was with a somewhat shipwrecked sensation that I wheeled it off down a side-street in search of an out-of-the-way first encounter. Then I rode it, and for the next six days this machine and I were virtually inseparable. Great as the temptation was, I touched nothing that might have upset whatever magic held it together—not even attempting a clutch adjustment to make second gear less of a gamble. I simply rode it, hard and fast, for something over 400 miles.

It was, I think, the only machine on which I've felt on equal terms with the Italians!

PARILLA—



A 49 c.c. engine (ABOVE) is the heart of the Parilla. Model S4 (LEFT) can do 40-45 m.p.h. Tuning of the four-stroke motor might produce even better figures



"Not bad," I said when I returned it to its owner. "Of course," he said. "It's a Parilla."

Since then some delving, and acquaintance with other Parilla models, has convinced me that the makers of these machines are well justified in nominating them the "greyhounds of mopeds."

Moto Parilla are a medium-sized "family" concern based on Milan. They were well established in the conventional motor cycle field long before the chief, Giovanni Parilla, decided to enter the moped market, but it seems that, unlike some of their competitors, Parilla have never been greatly concerned with vast production. Quality has rather been the keynote: to the point, in fact, of luxury in most models. Moreover, Sig. Parilla, although now essentially an industrialist, with three factories to administer, is by training and inclination an engineer whose pride in his products extends to rolling up his sleeves and getting busy on the bench. It is a policy evident in the mopeds as in the "bigger stuff."

At the bottom of the range is the 49 c.c. two-stroke "Parallino." One's first impression of it is that—unlike some models to judge by both their looks and handling idio-

syncrasies—it was put down on the drawing board as a unit, all at once: a moped wasn't built round an engine or vice versa. The frame, welded up in tubular steel, with a separate 9-pint fuel-tank, is of the "open" type but is rigidified in a way that eliminates virtually all whip (a failing of many ultra-lightweights) and yet leads to the absorption of any maximum turnover vibration before it can reach the rider.

The suspension is luxurious, leading link on the front on the model I rode (but now telescopic), with a well-damped swinging-fork at the rear.

Power-Unit

The power-unit is a piece of the Italian small-engine wizardry that has become so general as to be accepted almost without comment: a 49 c.c. (38 mm. x 44 mm.) steeply inclined two-stroke developing 1.3 b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m., beautifully compact, tidy and accessible. A del'Orto carburetter feeds it and it works integrally with a three-speed gearbox, transmission being by chain throughout with the final drive fully shielded.

GREYHOUND OF MOPEDS

An account of three machines from a famous Italian manufacturer whose quality-comes-first approach has produced mopeds unquestionably among the leaders in their field

The brake arrangement is of a type that, strictly speaking, is illegal over here—4½ in. drums coupled to a single right-hand lever. A number of Continental manufacturers favour this system and there is no doubt that, kept properly adjusted, it provides anchorage very hard to beat on a lightweight. On the Parilla it gives the sensation of surety and safety under any conditions one experiences with a disc-braked sports car.

A Marelli flywheel-mag. supplies direct power for the simply arranged and easily got-at 6-volt lighting. Generous wheels (18×2), deeply valanced steel mudguards, a wishy rather high-set handlebar, a small but surprisingly comfortable mattress-type saddle, and an adequate exhaust system complete the machine, which weighs 118 lb.

Stability

It is an excellent creation as mopeds go, "solid," stable, reliable in every department, and offering a maximum speed of a little over 30 m.p.h. and an economy approaching 200 m.p.g.

Comparing it with other models, however, Sig. Parilla may have felt that his proportions were not quite right: that so excellent an overall machine not only deserved and could accommodate a higher performance, but that application of one would put it in a class to compare with the very best machinery in the field.

So, as I imagine it, was born the four-stroke 49 c.c. (40×39 mm.) overhead-valve engine which, fitted to the "Parallino," forms the 35 m.p.h., 200 m.p.g.-plus T.4 model that I had first ridden; and which also powers the slightly faster, rakish "sports" S.4.

If the Italian genius in the realm of little four-strokes were not already renowned, it would be difficult to credit the capacity not only for speed but for sheer hard graft of

what, fundamentally, seems a fairly conventional engine. As applied to the T.4, it develops only 1.8 b.h.p. at 5,570 r.p.m., and yet provides in my experience a strict maximum on-the-flat speed, well run-in, of 35 m.p.h. Given the slightest encouragement in road and wind conditions, plus a little patience, and it will purr sweetly at up to an indicated 50 m.p.h., with not the slightest evidence of strain. Top gear on any moped, of course, is not designed for hill-climbing, but during some 500 variegated miles aboard the T.4, including a throttle-punishing Black Country jaunt, I never found a hill to master second. Indeed, only two faults became apparent: a tendency for second gear slip under heavy load (a matter of adjustment probably), and a slightly low first gear too easily over-revved (but possibly necessary on Italian mountain roads).

Economical

The pedals, of course, are there simply as kick-starts and footrests. Although I made no specific fuel consumption tests, I put my hand in my pocket little enough for the 200 m.p.g. tale to be accurate.

On the sports S.4, a slightly higher fuel consumption is the price of an advertised top speed of 40 m.p.h. and an actual one on the machine I rode of nearer 45. The engine is the T.4 unit, but employs a higher compression ratio and develops 2.2 b.h.p. at 6,400 r.p.m. On this machine as on the T.4 I had the impression that careful tuning, some carburetter "fiddling" and perhaps exhaust modification would produce even better performance without placing any undue strain on the unit.

In other departments the sports version, while having at a glance a different line to that of its brothers (the "racing" line in fact), is basically the same apart from a competition-type fuel tank, smaller trimmer handlebars and a very comfortable two-position "racing" or dual seat. Finish is black and red with chrome trim, whereas the T.2 and T.4 come in grey-white and black-white.

Cornering

Power and economy would seem perhaps the most appealing points about the Parilla mopeds, but for me their most striking features are their handling characteristics. There are a number of mopeds as quick as this trio (although not many as quick *and* as economical), but it would be a very noble machine indeed to better them in manageability, docility and road-holding, especially the four-strokes, and especially in the art of cornering.—E.C.B. ●

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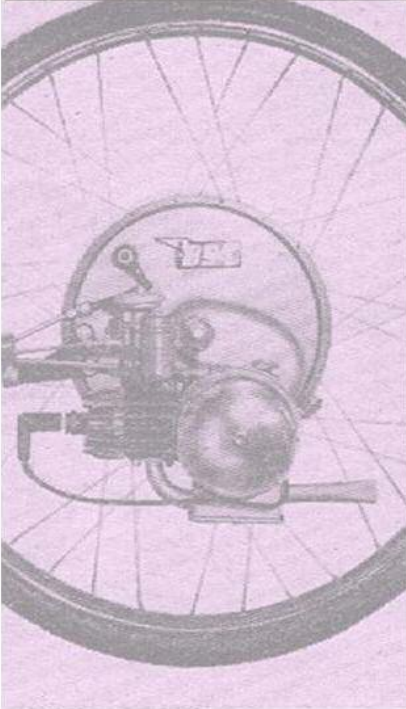
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