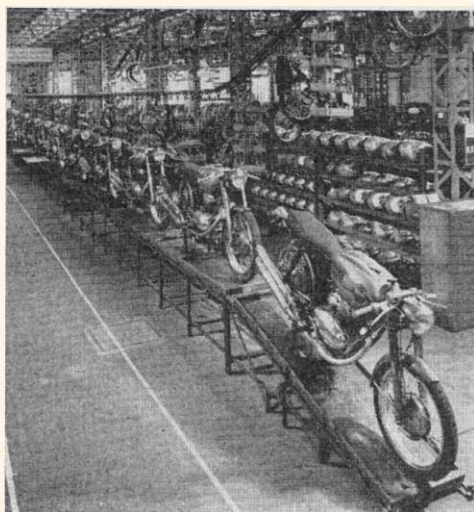


BRITISH JOURNALISTS IN ITALY

MOUNT TO SAN
MARINO BY
MOTOBI

Visit Pesaro: "Where some of the best two-wheelers in the world originate."

COMING OFF THE FINAL LINE in their hundreds are Benelli motor cycles and Motobi mopeds and scooters.

You go from London to Milan by air. You find two Alfa-Romeos waiting. You are whisked by night along the autostrada to Bologna for 140 miles. You then follow the Via Emilia, direct mostly but winding round the precincts of towns, and two-way and thronged. Suddenly, at a minor resort called Cattolica, you look casually leftward and see the Adriatic at the end of a side-street. You go inland again, through a low range of hills, and into another community, Pesaro, over 230 miles from Milan airport, a town of 65,000 inhabitants. And on your left gleams red neon: Motobi and Benelli, the signs say. You have reached at 1 a.m. on an October morning the place, well away from the main centres of Italian engineering, where some of the best two-wheelers in the world originate.

Six hours later you awake to hear the wind-dow-shutters rattling, reinforced by a mighty roar which you soon sense is the Adriatic Sea pounding on the sands.

Before a light breakfast, you take a walk along the promenade and sands and realise that you are in an elegant resort, whose most modern hotel, the skyscraper Principe, you arrived at in the small hours.

Soon your efficient and courteous drivers of the night before, 37-year-old Luigi Benelli and 32-year-old Tino Sanchioni (technical director and publicity men respectively) turn up to take the party to the Benelli-Motobi works. The others are: Frank Farr (*Power and Pedal*), Jon Stevens (*Scooter World*), Jack Stocker (managing director, Europa Imports) D. B. Richardson (secretary, EI) and Keith Harrison (sales manager, EI).

Into the courtyard of a yellow-painted single-storey works, the main Benelli enterprise; for-

ward to the hush of the main offices, which at first assume the air of a monastery, until you see the quick-eyed secretaries; and so into the board-room to meet administrative director, 74-year-old Giovanni Benelli, telling the party how much he appreciates the visit and how much good he thinks about the British motor-cycle industry.

Then on into the works, a spotlessly clean series of blocks, housing modern machine-tools (some with electronic controls), fully occupied conveyors, British-made electro-static sprayers, gas-dryers, and never a woman in sight—all the workers in the plant are men, all 350 of them.

Between looking at horizontal borers performing all the motions on a cylinder-head or a crankcase in one operation, or machines grinding crankcase faces, you learn from Giovanni or from 32-year-old commercial director Marco Benelli that Benelli is putting in more machine-tools to cater for growing business with the USA, where the main outlet is a firm with 300 branches, that the Benelli concern was founded in 1911 and is still a family business...

Then you go into the development and racing departments to see Tarquino Provini and to the self-contained school — and so out to the private, well-banked test-track which is almost surrounded by Benelli departments.

Lined up are the 15 or so models currently made by Benelli-Motobi, 48cc mopeds, 98 and 125cc scooters, and motor cycles from 50 to 250cc. Circulating are test-track drivers and you are soon circulating with them, getting 40mph out of a Motobi moped of 50cc and 50 out of a 125cc scooter.

Next into the boardroom, to answer Giovanni's enquiries about what you have seen: "An eye-opener" is how you journalists sum up. Further comment: "Amazed at compactness of range, despite the variety offered (engines of the two scooters identical except in bore and stroke, specifications standardized, making for easy spare-parts stocking).

You hear the comments of Giovanni Benelli:

Prospects good for small powered two-wheelers

of all kinds, everywhere in the world.

Surprised that there are so few all-British 50cc jobs—plenty of sales still for these in Britain. Characterization of Italian home market: sales in general 25 per cent down.

No serious inroads by Japanese two-wheelers.

Wants British in Common Market.

Provinci's "four" touches 14,000 revs.

When will Avon be back in motor-cycle game—we idolize their tyres.

Next you go along the road to the Motobi factory, to see scooters being made ready for the British market. Test-benches are on continuous running—at least six hours at 3-4,000 revs for each engine.

Then a band of serious leather-coated testers presents machines for riding—the practical test you asked Jack Stocker to provide, a run along public roads, over Italian hills, to see how the machines perform. You recall that never before has a European maker ever had so much faith in his products that he would let you do just this.

You start on a 125cc Motobi scooter on a quiet road, the local panoramic highway, which hugs the sea-coast at varying altitudes, always high above the water, descending into lateral valleys, escalating up gradients of up to 1-in-8, around hairpins, to dizzy heights above the Adriatic. Never down to first, mainly humming along in top and only occasionally slipping the hand-change into second. The full-width brakes hold on anything, steering is always right.

Finally— for that day, anyway—the hill-climb. You come at dusk into a tree-shadowed lane that quickly rears itself into a 1-in-6. You remove a road-barrier and see that the ascent is being dug up for drains or cables. A 3ft ridge runs between two semi-continuous trenches that might well be unfilled graves.

You give the 125 its head in second and find that despite the gradient, the roughness and the slip-

You heel the Motobi over on the bends, slipping down a gear as the gradient rears up.

The traffic is light, thank goodness, and as you drop into bottom for a spell of 1-in-6 you realize that the easy control comes from a well-balanced model which has 16in wheels. The balance is as comforting as that of a motor cycle.

Up and still up. Along ledge after ledge. Then more houses and shops, closing in and seen dimly through the rain. You ken now that you are higher than Snaefell—and the weather is just in keeping with that other mountain. Even the black-helmeted policemen could be British!

Somewhere, up in the clouds, you come to a parking place, obviously on a pinnacle. After a wait, you realize that you are still on your own, very much so. Then a well-equipped works rider, much better clothed for the job than yourself, turns up, takes you down 200ft for a coffee and a cognac, over which you British agree that if Benelli and Motobi lightweight can tackle Mount San Marino in a rainstorm, they are good enough to deal with anything in the way of British hills, traffic and weather!

On the final morning, you start for Milan airport at 11, after saying goodbye to the works executives. On the 100-mile journey to Bologna and the start of the motorway, you marvel at the large number of two-wheelers in use in Italy (as you did in Holland earlier in the year): bicycles, mopeds, scooters, motor cycles. As in Holland, you feel that there are big lessons for the British trade and industry to learn from Continental Europe. Meanwhile, there are on the UK market the same robust, comfortable and efficient Benelli and Motobi machines as can be bought in Italy.

Benelli and Motobi motor cycles, scooters and mopeds are distributed in the United Kingdom by Europa Imports Ltd. (sales manager, K. Harrison), Pangbourne, Berkshire.

IN THE MAIN ASSEMBLY SHOP of Benelli, 74-year-old director Giovanni Benelli (r) escorts Jack Stocker (Europa Imports) and Harold Briercliffe (l), of the *Trader*.



periness, the Motobi does the 400-yard climb neatly. But look! What's that going up next? It's Jack Stocker, after a fast run-in on the flat, taking the grade superbly on a 50cc job!

Another morning and, surprisingly, a dull sky and a grey Adriatic. You go by car along the throbbing highway back towards Milan, until after 22 miles and just short of Rimini and at sea level, you swing left along a modern motorway. In front, stretching in a fantastic frieze, the turrets of San Marino, 2,200ft up and 15 miles away, poke into clouds to the west.

Again, race-attired mechanics hand you a purring 125cc Motobi scooter and you, with Signore Stevens, Farr and Harrison, are off, heading in light rain towards San Marino.

Soon, you are out in front, on your own, well ahead of the pack. For halfway, perhaps, the road is straight, with only a slight up-grade. Then, fantastically, it coils and curls and forever mounts.

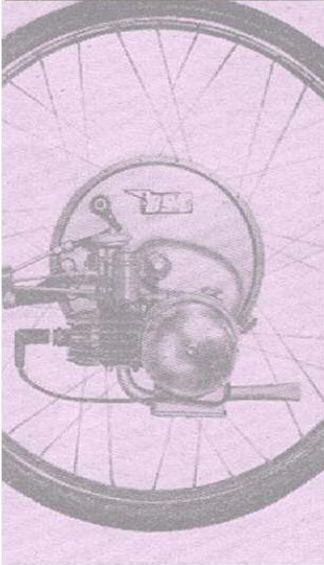
Honda production racing models withdrawn

European Honda GmbH has announced that, with effect from November 1, 1964, the Honda 50cc and 125cc production racing motor cycles, which have been available in the UK for two years, will be withdrawn from the range.

Following this announcement Honda does not intend to market any production racing machines next season.

Spare parts for all racing machines sold to date will continue to be available from the European Honda service centre at Wollaton Road, Nottingham.

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