

2003 Polini Minibike Racer

SUCCESSFUL ESPECIALLY IN the Italian Minibike Championships, Polini Motori have wheeled out a brand-new model for the 2003 season called the "910 Steel GP2." Building on the company's excellent 2002 model, it is considerably improved.

The frame and swingarm allow a revised engine positioning, and are now made from carbon steel tubing to give optimum strength for any rider who might step aboard. Formerly, the firm used a twin alloy beam design. Footrest assemblies are cast alloy and now provide a more comfortable riding position. Forks are new, 24mm units, stiffened up with chrome-moly legs and light alloy sliders, and a new steering damper further aids handling.

A choice of three Polini 39.69cc (36mm x 39mm, bore/stroke) liquid cooled, two-stroke motors are available. The engine outputs available are 4.2 hp, 6.2 hp and... 12 hp! The brakes are new and more powerful, the front disc being 148mm, with a 230mm at the rear, and the wheels are in Ergal aluminum mounted with tubeless tires. Finally, the fairing and fender are restyled to be, as Polini says, "Modern, young and gritty!"



Gilera Nexus Scooter

GILERA, WITH ITS new V-twin motorcycles still on hold after the failed link-up with Cagiva, have turned their attentions to the "Big" scooter market, and have just announced the pre-production prototype 500cc Nexus, which is promised to be in volume production by June.

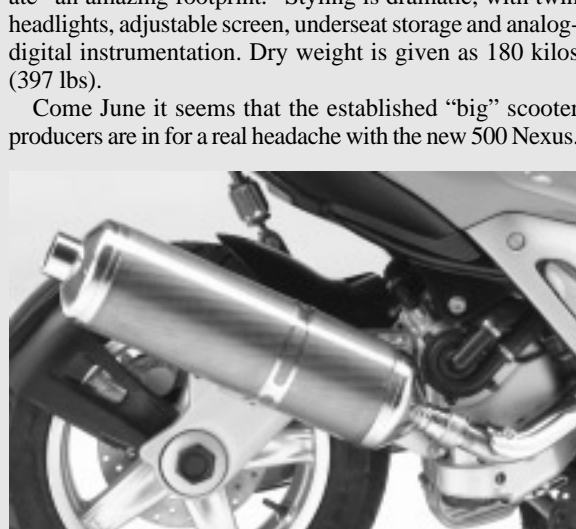
In true Gilera form, the Nexus is no ordinary 500cc scooter. They have managed to integrate both scooter and motorcycle design-engineering to create a very impressive machine. The engine is a liquid-cooled 460cc four-stroke single, SOHC with 4-valves, and with electronic fuel injection. It produces 40.12 bhp @ 7500 rpm. Ignition is electronic and transmission described as "CVT automatic ratio variation with torque convertor." The clutch is centrifugal and therefore fully automatic. The two handlebar levers control the front and rear Brembo brakes; twin 260mm discs forward and a 240mm disc rear. The right lever operates the front right hand disc, and the left lever engages the front left disc and the rear disc together.

The transmission is integrated within the left-hand side swingarm. Called the "Direct Link," it actually connects

just like a motorcycle, with an adjustable Kayaba shock. Up front, the forks are 41mm (also Kayaba) with 109mm of travel. The chassis is conventional tubular steel, and the wheels are a wide cast alloy style with 120/70-15" and 160/60-14" tires which Gilera claims create

"an amazing footprint." Styling is dramatic, with twin headlights, adjustable screen, underseat storage and analog-digital instrumentation. Dry weight is given as 180 kilos (397 lbs).

Come June it seems that the established "big" scooter producers are in for a real headache with the new 500 Nexus.



Moriwaki's V5 MotoGP Revealed

DURING THE LATTER half of 2002, rumors were rife that Honda was preparing to supply tuning specialist Moriwaki Engineering with one of their 990cc V5 race engines, for installation in a new Moriwaki chassis intended for eventual MotoGP action. Late in December the bare bones bike appeared, the MD211VF, and the first official photo to be released shows just what an impressive device has been prepared. The Honda engine is cared for entirely by Honda, but Moriwaki have designed new exhaust systems which are a work-of-art in themselves, to achieve the throttle characteristics that they deem necessary. The frame is in tubular steel in trellis fashion. Moriwaki are past masters in chassis design,

and it will be interesting to see just how this stacks up against the original Honda alloy frames in competition. Suspension is supplied by Ohlins, and the swingarm is fabricated in light alloy—extremely strong, to resist the power that will be put down. Overall design is conventional, with the gas tank where it "should be" and with ram-air intakes clearly visible. Brakes are Nissin and the discs currently



in steel, but the machine is still in its first stage of development. They must be down for replacement with carbon units not too far down the road.

Technical data is not being released as yet, but just looking at this device must be a joy for any enthusiast. Have you ever seen a frame filled better?

Brazilian Hondas

HONDA MOTOR'S BRAZILIAN plant has for many years produced large numbers of the models we see at our dealers' shops in Europe and elsewhere, but it still manages to find time and capacity to produce a few models exclusively for their own flourishing home market. Three new models are presented for 2003, a 100cc, 250 and a 400.

The smallest is the former C100BIZ step-thru, but with larger-than-usual brakes, an extra-chunky rear tire, and a sporty megaphone exhaust system. It sports a 100cc OHC single with a 5-speed gearbox, producing 7.6 hp @ 8600 rpm, and weighs in at 91.3 kg., or

201 lbs.—fine for Brazilian commuting.

But the larger models—the XR250 Tornado and NX4 Falcon—are developed from the basic XR250 and XR400 Honda motors, but in Dual-Purpose/Adventure guise, with new styling and high-level exhaust systems to look the part.



The XR250 Tornado 250 has DOHC and a six-speed gearbox, and produces 23.3 hp @ 7500 rpm, with 21" and 18" wire wheels and alloy rims. Disc and drum brakes, 240mm and 130mm respectively, stop the bike, which looks fit for the trail with a high clearance front fender and gaiters on the forks.



Its frame is duplex-cradle in steel-tube, and the rear suspension is the usual Pro-Link. Lastly, the fuel tank capacity is 11.5 litres (3 gals.), completing a neat looking package.

Moving up to the NX4 Falcon, the 397.2cc XR motor fitted with RFVC makes 30.6 hp @ 6500 rpm and puts it down via a five-speed box. The frame is again duplex cradle, but not the same as the 250, and utilizing conventional forks and Pro Link rear suspension with the front fender this time hugging the wheel, presumably more street oriented. Wheels are 21" and 17" with alloy rims, and disc brakes front and rear.

—Doug Jackson