

# CYCLE

ROAD TEST NO. 119

By the CYCLE Staff

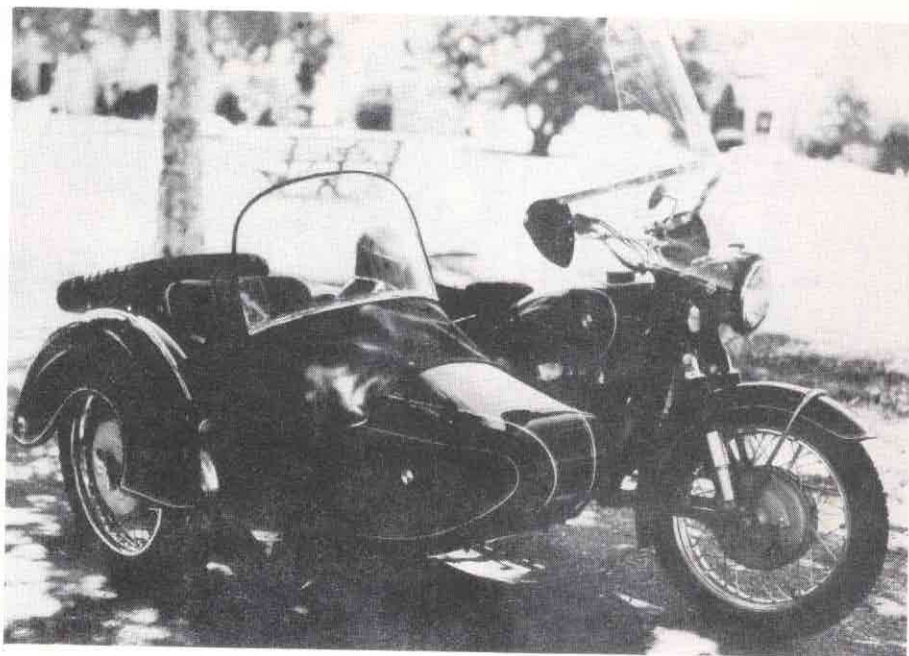


## THE BMW R69S

At 35 miles per hour in high gear, the front tire coming in contact with the ground makes more noise than the engine. If this wasn't a motorcycling magazine, you would think that we were describing some sort of an ultra-refined automobile. Refinement, though, is the word that fits this fine example of motorcycle craftsmanship. The faster the BMW R69S is run, the less audible the exhaust becomes. Wind noise at speeds over 40 mph is also louder than the engine noise.

These were only a few of the things that we found out about the test bike that we had the use of for several weeks. To make the test even more unusual, we had a sidecar attached. Because of the increasing popularity of sidecars over the last few years, it seemed that we were long overdue on testing a combination of this sort. For outright fun and versatility, a sidecar is pretty hard to beat.

Our beautifully prepared test bike



was made available to us by Earl Flanders, of Pasadena, California, BMW distributor for the Western United States.

The horizontally opposed BMW engine is almost a trademark in itself. As previously mentioned, we were testing the 595cc model. The overhead valve engine has a bore of 72mm and a stroke of 73mm. The crankshaft is supported on both ball and roller bearings. The big end uses roller bearings. Even the rocker arms move on good size needle bearings. The compression ratio is 9.5:1 which is a jump from that of the earlier standard models which only had a ratio of 7.5:1. A copious supply of oil is supplied to the engine through a wet sump lubrication system.

Your very first glance at the BMW lets you know that here is something completely different in motorcycles. The gleaming black paint job makes a fine contrast with the thin white striping and highly polished chrome

and aluminum. The complete outer surfaces of the engine are all aluminum alloy. The factory sidecar was a perfect match for our test bike. This was also painted black and white with just enough chrome to look good but still maintain a conservative effect.

Starting at all times was strictly a one kick affair. The kickstarter operates transversely to the engine. We found that the easiest way to operate the starter was by standing off to the side of the bike. The lever has a long



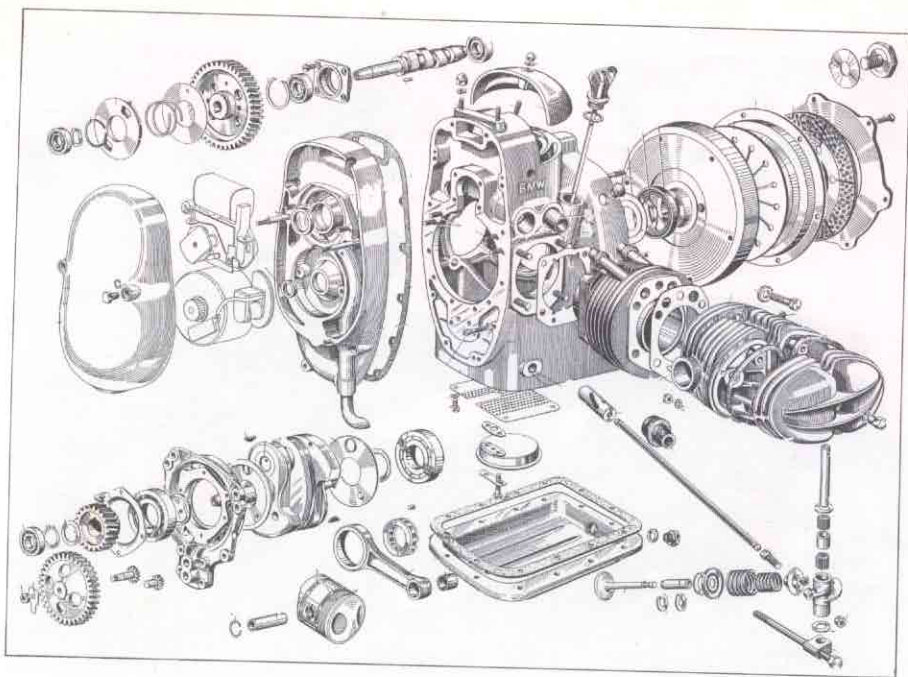
Jim Davis explains to Carol Anderson the details of the horizontally opposed engine of the R69S.



Cinderella's coach had nothing on the BMW.

distance to travel, and the internal gearing seems to be quite low. This turns the engine over at a very rapid rate for starting. This was another one of those motorcycles that would start twenty times in a row without missing once.

The BMW is one of the smoothest



time to avoiding the traffic around him.

Brakes are another one of the strong points of the BMW. Along with being smooth and silent, they bring the bike and sidecar to a standstill in record time. Both wheels have brakes that measure 8 inches in diameter and 1 1/4 inches wide. Slack can be taken out of the controls with only the use of the fingers. No tools are required. Hydraulic braking is also incorporated in the sidecar wheel.

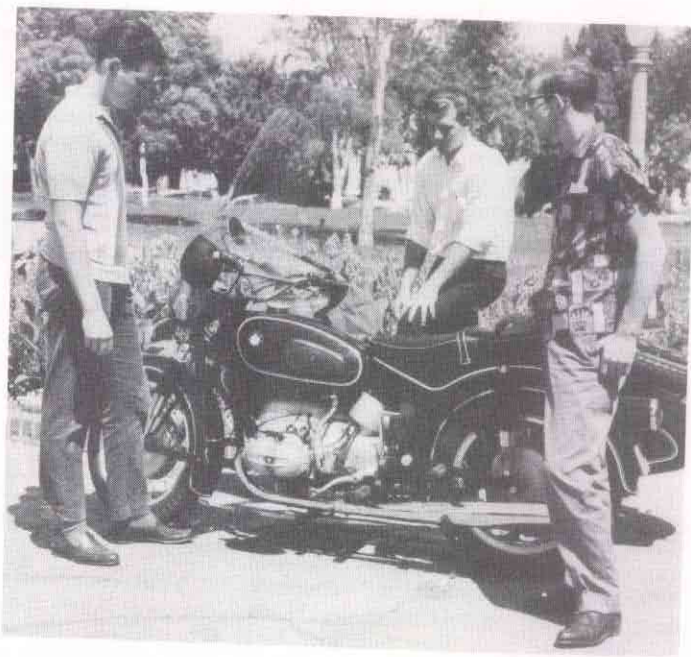
After two weeks of running, there was not one spot of oil leakage. The only thing that we did to prepare for the photographs you see on these pages, was to wipe off the Los Angeles smog that had accumulated over a period of time.

Most BMW enthusiasts claim that repairs seldom have to be made on their motorcycle. Just in case any work might have to be done, though,

machines we have ever tested. At times, it is actually difficult to tell if the engine is running. When the bike is in neutral with the switch on, a green light is lit on the headlight housing. Although the clutch has only one plate, engagement was at all times smooth and fairly silent. For some reason, this couldn't always be said about the earlier models. Gear ratios are fairly close, and with the added weight of the sidecar, it was like driving an automobile with an automatic transmission.

Both the motorcycle and the sidecar were tops in comfort. Mile after mile could be covered without any signs of fatigue. The Earles type BMW suspension has been famous for many years. The front and rear shock units are spring loaded and also make use of hydraulic damping. The front is adjustable for trail and load, and the rear shocks for load only. When setting the rear units, no wrench is required. A small lever is built right in, so all that is needed

Three students, Bob Lane, Clark Garnet, and Paul Spinks were just a few of the many people that stopped to admire the BMW during the course of the test.

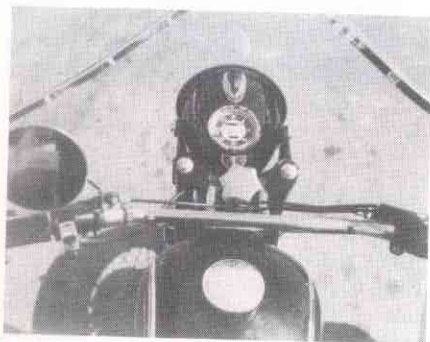


is a twist of the wrist — which is a nice feature.

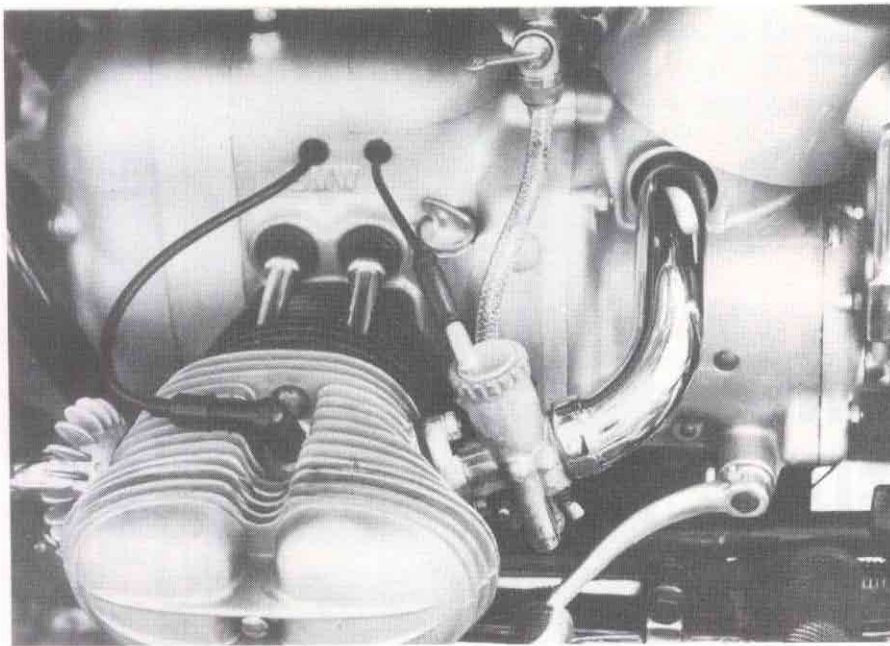
All the controls were perfectly positioned. The clutch lever could be pulled in with one finger even by a person with small hands. The dimmer switch was situated in such a way that it could be operated without removing the left hand from the grip. Speaking of controls, the BMW people have come up with an interesting innovation. This is a variable operating speed throttle. For traffic and around town driving where smaller throttle openings are used, the twist grip operates slowly. The further the grip is opened, the faster the throttle opens. This way, the rider can take his mind off precision throttle twisting and devote more

the factory has equipped each bike with a very complete tool kit, cleverly concealed in a panel in the tank.

Along with being noticeably silent, this sporting version of the BMW has power to spare. In heavy traffic, pulling the sidecar, the bike would trickle along at 13 miles an hour without any signs of protest from the engine. Crack the throttle on the open highway, and before you realize it the century mark is coming into sight. A cruising speed of 75 mph is very easy to maintain if needed. As for engine vibration, there is none at all, no matter what speed you're riding at. Even when the engine is lugging, not the slightest tingling of the footpegs can be felt.

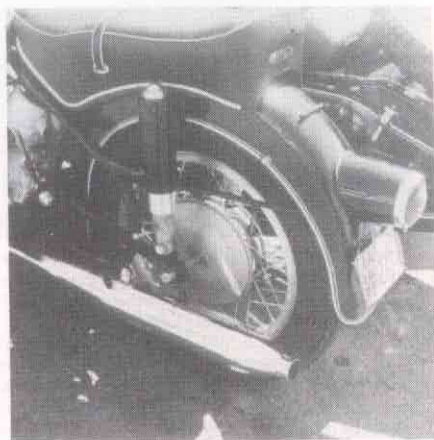


A rider's view of our test bike.



This is a picture of an engine that has just completed over one thousand miles. The only cleaning that was done was a complete dusting with a feather duster. When someone speaks about a BMW being a clean machine, this is what they mean.

One episode that did much to prove the reliability of the BMW machines occurred in June of 1959. John Penton, a BMW dealer and Enduro rider of note, rode 3,051 miles from coast to coast in 52 hours and 11 minutes on a standard R69



Large tuned mufflers, hinged rear fender, comfortable dual seat, and hand adjustable rear shocks are just a few of the items visible in this photo.

model. After this trip from New York to Los Angeles was over, the only thing that could be found wrong was the front brake action was rough and a little oil had leaked out on top of the crankcase. Here is a record that any BMW can be proud of.

One thing that we have found to be below average on many machines made today, is the horn. Either it sounds like an anemic duck or it is hidden away in the depths of the motorcycle where hardly any sound can escape. The BMW is not plagued with either of these difficulties. The horn is mounted in the front of the frame, and the sound it emits is more than sufficient to warn a non-attentive motorist of your presence.

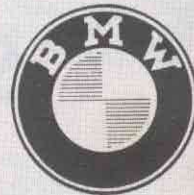
The lighting system is up to par for a high speed touring machine. The rubber mounted headlight throws a strong, steady beam that illuminates the road quite well for high speed night riding. The taillight is good, but it could have a little more glass protruding from the housing. We noticed that if the bike was approached from the side under very dark conditions, even with the lights on, it was difficult to see.

A road test on a motorcycle as fine as this is hard to end without the use of many flowery descriptive phrases that really serve no useful purpose. In the case of a BMW, you get exactly what you pay for. This is a silent, clean and extremely road-worthy motorcycle. Better yet, to quote from a statement found in every BMW ad, "Ask any BMW owner."



# THE BMW R69S

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## GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

Bore .....	72 mm
Stroke .....	73 mm
No. of Cylinders.....	2 Horizontally Opposed
Capacity .....	595 cc
Compression Ratio.....	9.5 to 1
Rated Horsepower.....	42
RPM .....	7,200
Carburetors.....	Bing 1/26/69/70
Clutch.....	Single Plate Automotive Type
Gear Ratios (Solo)	
First .....	13.03 to 1
Second .....	8.53 to 1
Third .....	6.07 to 1
Fourth .....	4.82 to 1
Top Gear (with sidecar).....	5.94 to 1
Final Drive.....	Enclosed shaft and helical bevel gears
Brakes.....	8 x 1 3/4 in.
Weight (Solo).....	448 lbs.
Fuel Tank Capacity.....	4.4 gals.
Gas Consumption.....	From 50 to 55 mpg depending on speed and terrain