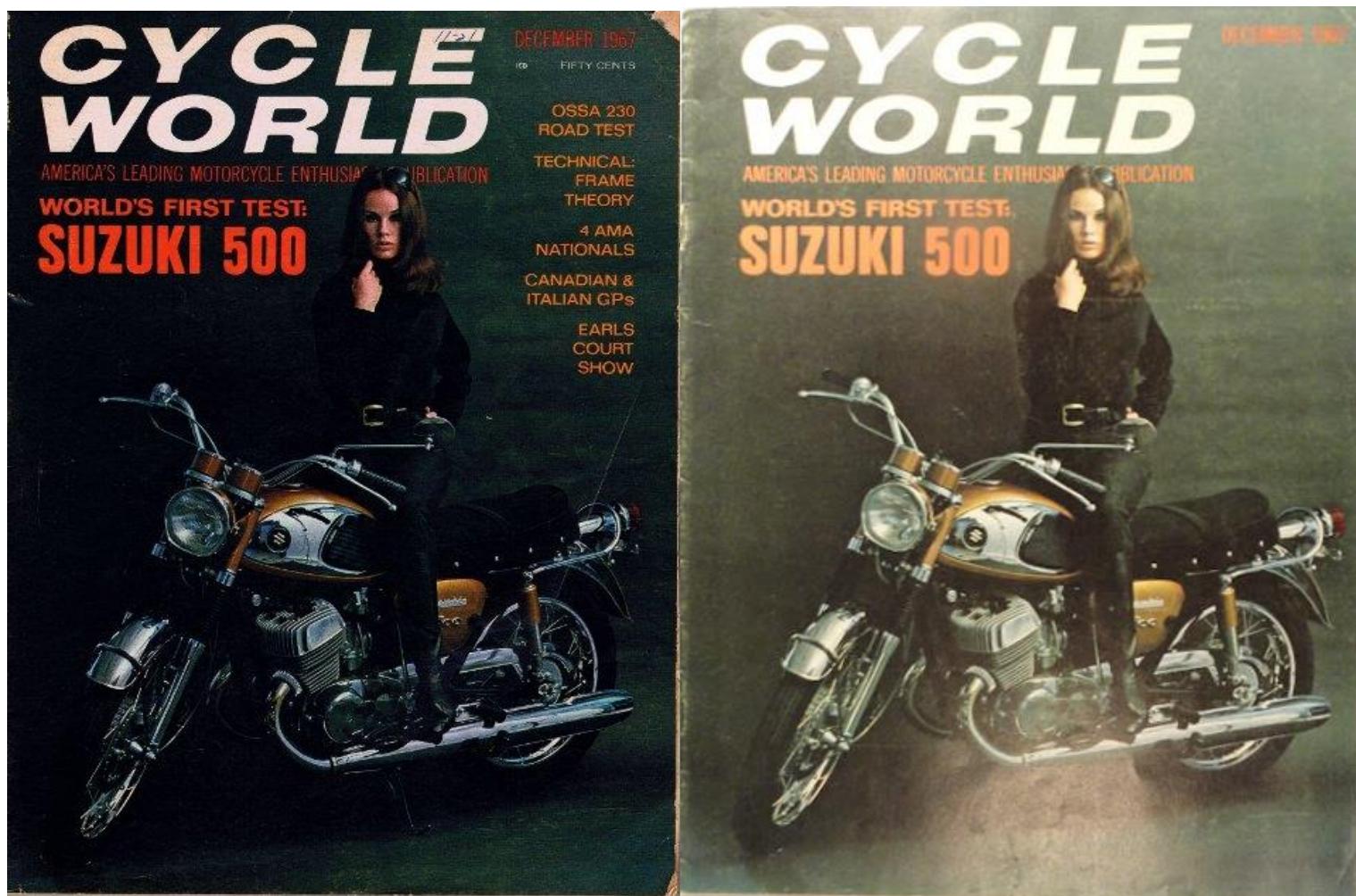


The 500/5 and T500 Question - Material contributed by Eric from North Virginia

The December 1967 issue of Cycle World, presented the new 500/5 model and listed its specifications . A collection of Cycle World road tests were gathered together and re-published by Suzuki as an advertising handout, also with a December 1967 cover date, that included a letter from Suzuki detailing the changes made to the design since the original road test had been done.

Here are scans of the two covers - the Cycle World December 1967 magazine on the left, and the Suzuki advertising brochure on the right.



That letter included in the brochure appears below, and a close-up of it below that.

SUPPLEMENT - CYCLE WORLD REPRINT T500.

We want to bring to your attention that after this road test was made by CYCLE WORLD, we made the following changes in the 500/FIVE:

Wheelbase - changed from 52.7 to 55.9

Rear Tire - changed from 3.50-18 to 4.00-18

Over-all Length is now 7' - 1-1/4".

The above changes have made this world's first production two-

stroke 500 cc sportcycle capable of even better performance

than the excellent report on performance as listed by CYCLE WORLD

in this road test reprint.

barns

Hideharu Masui,
Advertising Manager

These then are the specifications for the T500 Mk I. What is unclear is the length of elapsed time between the original Cycle World article appearing, and the release of the reprint as both carry the same date of December 1967. If they were published close together, then it raises the question of whether 500/5's actually were ever 'officially' sold.

Not mentioned in the letter are what other changes were also made - one obvious one is that the exhausts were now longer to accommodate the change in length of the swing arm. Looking at the parts listings, it is interesting (at least to anoraks like myself !) to note that the first part number listed for the mufflers are 14301-15002 and 14302-15002 for the right and left on the Mk I which changed to 14301-15003 and 14302-15003 for the right and left at engine number 11520, or part the way through the Mk I production. Normal Suzuki practice was to change the last digit of a part number if it was a version change so presumably there were two previous muffler styles prior to the first one (the 15002's) listed for the Mk I. Possibly more documentation and/or original examples will surface over time.

With help from many other owners, I am recording 'starting' and 'ending' frame numbers - not to create a registry, but to try and nail down actual production numbers. The list is available at this link. At the moment we have yet to confirm a 500/5, and as well there appears to be a gap in production between the Mk I and the Mk II models of about 4000 units. If you have in your possession a bike with a higher or lower frame number than we have recorded so far, ideally with a photo, I would like to hear from you!

A persistent urban myth, which is regularly repeated in the press, is that the 500/5 had a 10 fin barrel. None of the early news photos or photos in the Suzuki shop manuals show this - they all clearly show 11 fins. A possible explanation for the origin of the myth may be the ad that also ran in the December 1967 Cycle World issue showing the 500/5 - the fin just even with the top of the exhaust collar is in shadow, and so not clearly visible unless the photo is enlarged and so gives the appearance of being a 10 fin barrel. It is also possible that some reporter just couldn't count!

Suzuki makes it! World's first 500cc Dual-Stroke.

The finishing touches another first! Magnificent metallic jewel-smith. In glittering gold. Or ruby red. Or sappire blue. Rich, thick chromium fenders, too.

Altitude Compensating Carburetors—a Suzuki first! The 500/FIVE gets you to the top without gasping for air. Its twin-carburetors sense sea-level changes and automatically adjust their flow.

5-speed Constant-Mesh Transmission—first in its class! By hanging five on the 500/FIVE, Suzuki brings more performance out for you.

The engine that couldn't be built powers the 500/FIVE to a 55% in 13.2! 500cc's worth of power in the most compact engine ever built. The Suzuki Dual-Stroke. A hot 46 horses at a cool 7000 rpm! A top speed range of 110 to 120 mph!

Revolutionary Dual-Stroke with exclusive 12 Month/12,000 Mile Warranty

Big Racing-Bred Brakes. Another first: the rear brake is built into the swing arm. And shift lever can switch sides. If you prefer smooth stops, that's a brake for you.

Stabilizing Suspension. Deep-flexing, oil-damped front forks and rear swinging arms take the grind out of the bumps.

High-speed Tires. Specifically chosen to match the 500/FIVE's muscle through the turns.

Factory-installed Performance Panel—first for a sportcycle! Separate speedometer and tachometer modules—the high-test type you'd track on later, but we built them in.

Safety? First with Suzuki! Only Suzuki, of the leading sportcycles, is spec'd out specially for American standards of size and safety. That's a comfort any way you cut it.

Note: Shorter swingarm, different exhaust cut-out for the axle and different rear shock mounting points.

THE SUZUKI 500/FIVE

SUZUKI