

Cycle

AUGUST 1986 ■ \$1.75

BMW's K75T Triple
German Value Pack

Yamaha's New FZ600
Affordable Exotic

How Much For What? **Where The Smart Money Runs** **Bargains At All Prices**

\$6499

Suzuki GSX-R750 LTD
Suzuki LS650 Savage
Honda 200 Reflex

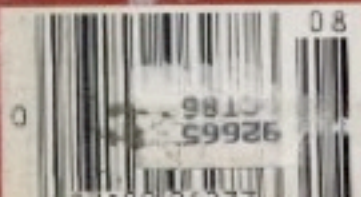
\$1999

\$1498



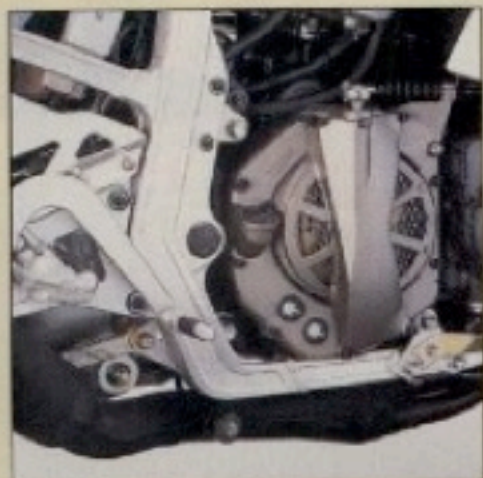
Stealth Factor

How Easily Your Bike Is Seen
By Police Radar. Of Course



SUZUKI GSX-R750R LTD

The LTD is more than flashy paint, flawless fiberglass, and trick parts. It's a true factory-built special, a limited edition in every sense, designed for the racetrack, sold for the street, and priced somewhere in between.



PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT DABOUGH



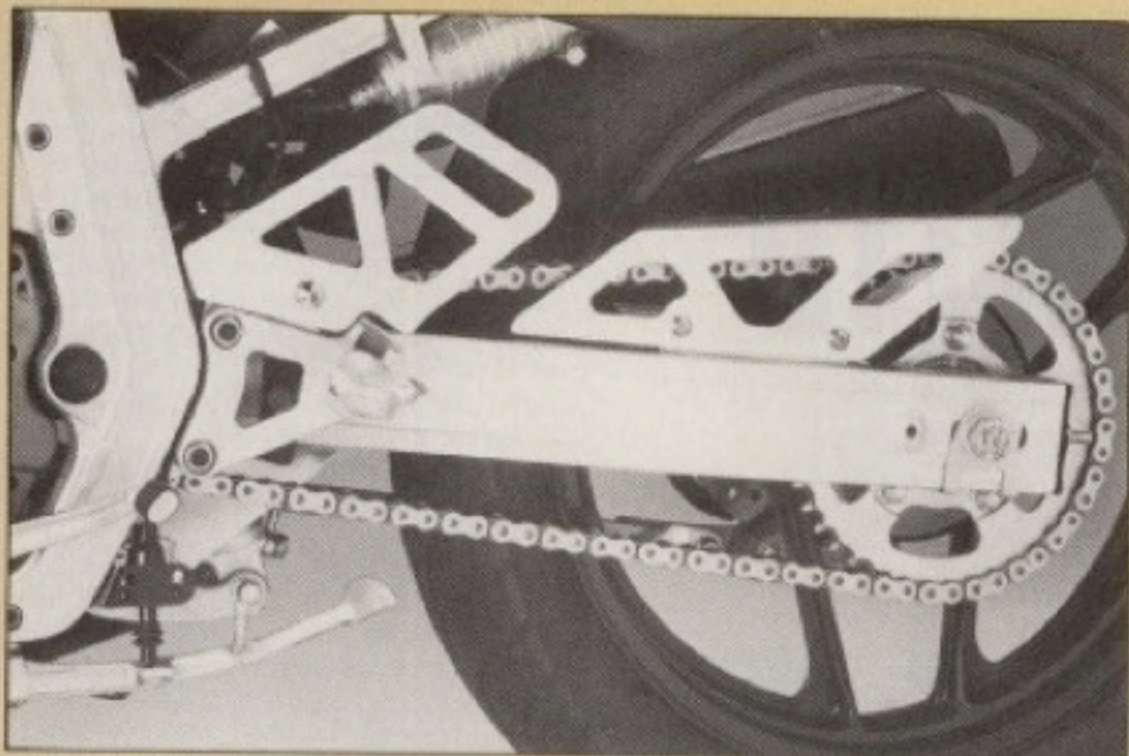
Motorcyclists have good reason to suspect limited editions. We've been disappointed before:

by limited editions commemorating an obscure event or a glorious racing victory; by limited editions celebrating the shrewdness of a marketing whiz who discovers that high-gloss paint and low serial numbers will tart up a sales curve flattened by superior models; by limited editions that aren't limited at all, but produced by the tens of thousands.

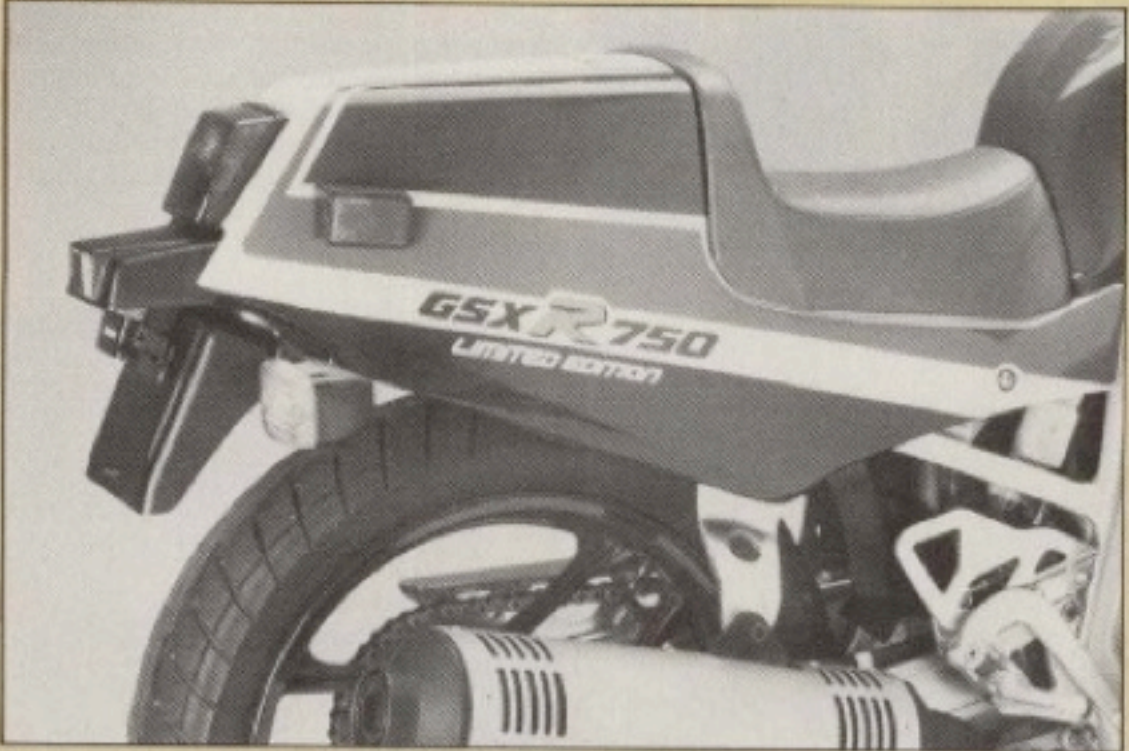
The best limited editions are precisely that: a run of bikes produced in a small number, not because the paint shop or the marketing department says so, but because the bikes themselves incorporate a number of limited-production bits of factory exotica. Suzuki's GSX-R750R LTD is a limited production model in this pure, distilled sense. When the production lines absorb all the trick parts, the roll is over—forever.

In stock trim, Suzuki's GSX-R750 is the pathfinder to a low-mass future. The LTD builds from this impressive foundation, uniting more impressive parts than anything this side of a square-four Gamma—but only for the anxious, the





The LTD's fiberless tailpiece features single seating only; high skirts increase airflow to the rear shock. Footguards, chain-guard and muffler bracket are lightweight polished aluminum.



GSX-R750R LTD

few, and the well-heeled who can plunk down \$6499 for the most expensive sport bike ever made in Japan. The LTD's fitments are straight from paddock row: huge floating 310mm front brake discs, a stout 41mm fork with electronic NEAS anti-dive, a special aluminum-bodied rear shock with a gas-charged remote reservoir, wide clip-on handlebars, a fairing with additional cooling ducts, a lightened countershaft sprocket cover, a solo-seat/tail-section of hand-laid fiberglass, and the most arresting piece of all—a real by-God dry clutch.

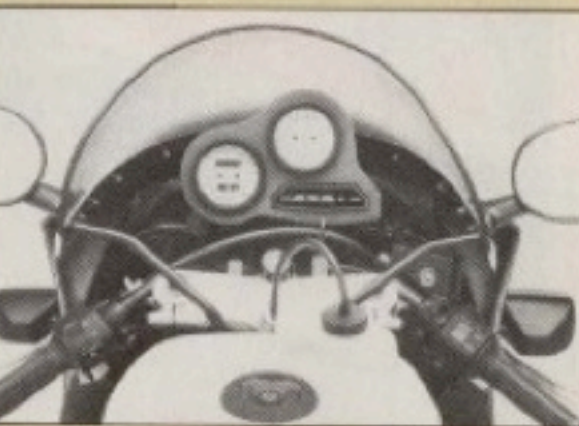
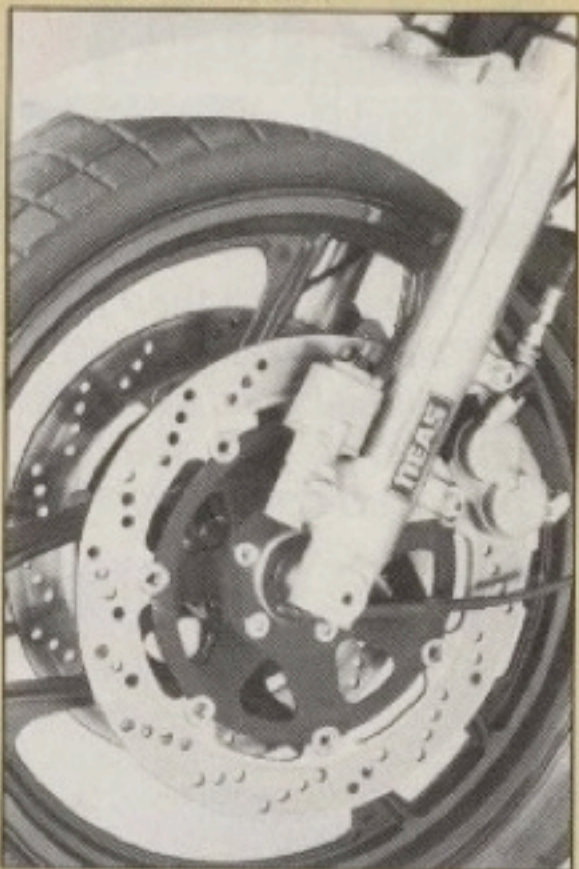
Why a dry clutch on a street bike? Won't it rust in the rain and act funky if it gets too dirty? Can't a prankster with a can of chain lube render it useless? Practical minds might quibble with the LTD's dry clutch; those folks would

sniff at the solo seat too. But practical minds can't make much sense of racing either, and racing is clearly the LTD's intent.

Dry clutches are the racer's friends. Located outboard of the engine cases, dry clutches are easily accessible. More important, when dry clutches do fail, they don't spit gritty friction-plate material into the engine oil. Too, because dry clutches do not spin in oil, they eliminate the considerable potential drag created by wet clutches plowing through viscous lube.

These are merely secondary benefits: the greatest advantage of a dry clutch makes itself known on the start line. Wet clutches can heat quickly with the engine revving in gear, and racers can find themselves being pulled prematurely away by a clutch heated to the point of engaging all by itself. Dry clutches don't generate as much internal heat—racers can sit for 20 seconds

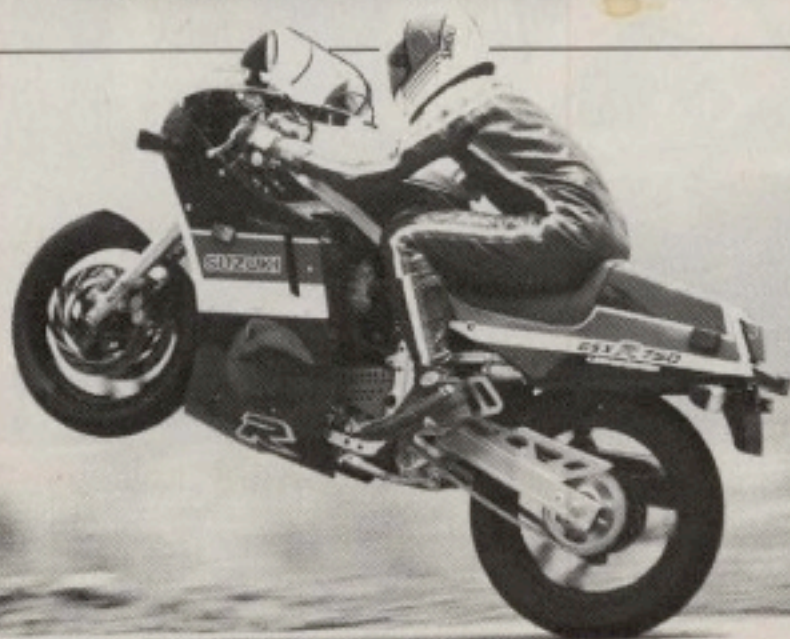
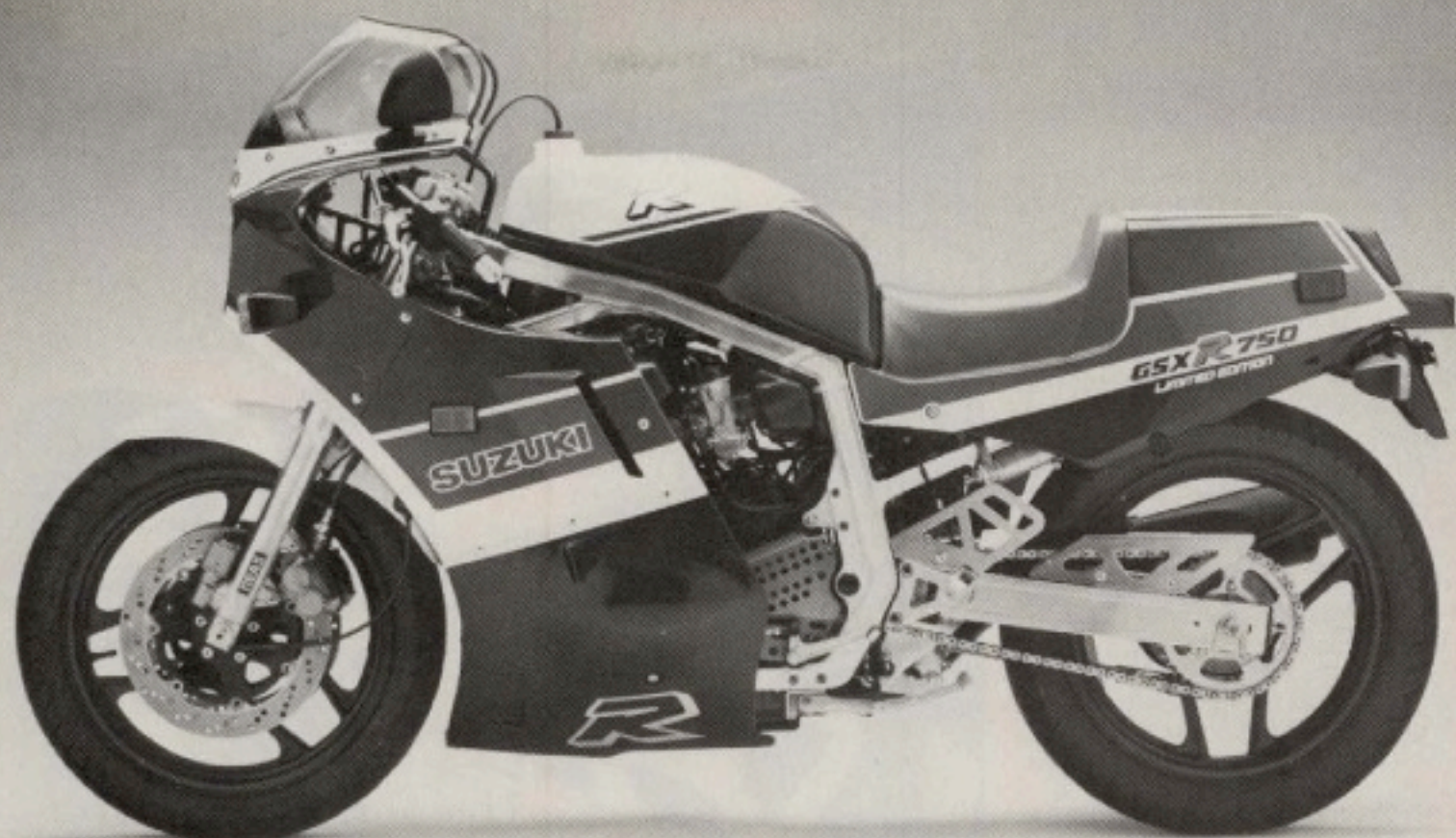
Electronic anti-dive fork and huge 310mm floating discs come from the GSX-1100. The brakes are phenomenal, fork action a bit stiff.



with the engine nibbling at redline while the starter fumbles with the flag.

Unless you make your exit from the Sunday-morning hangout in Grand Prix run-and-bump fashion, you probably won't care that the dry clutch also makes the LTD easier to push-start than the standard GSX. But you don't have to grandstand to appreciate the LTD's clutch: it is impervious to abuse and engages more crisply and precisely than the stock wet unit. A rider can shift all day with a single finger and not strain the working digit. In a word it's superb. And then there's the sound, the whirl/rattle/whirl of a serious racing machine, guaranteed to betray the ignorant. Those who know racing iron know this rhapsody: novice ears will hear only noise, and mistake it for mechanical neglect.

Quarter-mile performance underscores the advantage of the LTD's dry clutch: with a best run of 11.28 seconds at 118 mph, the LTD easily squirts away from the standard GSX-750 (11.33 seconds at 114 mph) and the Yamaha FZ750 (11.31 seconds at 116.37 mph), ending its run with a terminal speed five



The LTD is no painted-and-primed replacer—it's the real thing, the ultimate factory-prepared, finish-it-yourself superbike tool.

miles per hour faster than Honda's VFR750.

Aside from its cable-actuated dry clutch (the stocker's wet clutch is hydraulically actuated), the LTD engine is completely stock. Why didn't Suzuki sprinkle more hot parts into the LTD powerplant? The LTD is a street bike, and as such must run a quiet—read restrictive—pipe and muffler. If there's a single huge performance gain to be had, it's in the fitment of a less restrictive albeit louder exhaust system, and the factory can't do that. Fancy engine internals are murderously expensive, especially when produced in limited quantity and added to an already expensive bike (the dry clutch alone costs \$2000).

What the engine didn't get the chassis did. Sharp eyes will note two small ducts in the fairing's lower quarters: one on the left, and one on the right to direct cool air to the clutch. The front and rear brake assemblies—rotors, calipers, master cylinders—are race-grade components pirated from the GSX-R1100. Up front, eight live pistons clamp on a pair of enormous 310mm floating discs; the rear caliper, squeezing a 220mm rotor, is connected by a torque arm to the frame rather than the swing arm to minimize wheel hop during hard braking over choppy surfaces. The 1100 also contributed the LTD's 41mm NEAS fork, a suspension which uses an electronic pulse rather than hydraulic pressure to speed

anti-dive response under braking. While the LTD's anti-dive rates remain identical to the 1100's, spring and damping rates change, addressing the 750's lighter weight.

At 459 pounds wet, the LTD undercuts the standard 750 by six pounds, in the process becoming the spearhead in Suzuki's low-mass march. Much of that weight came out of the Full Floater rear suspension. The standard 750 uses a heavy, steel-bodied damper while the LTD's recalibrated, remote-reservoir, gas-charged shock is aluminum. Weight loss is not the only reason for this change: the standard 750 has a reputation for lading its rear shock during hard riding, not surprising considering the shock's proximity to the engine, its small-volume reservoir, and poor exposure to cooling air. The LTD's aluminum damper should offer significantly better heat dissipation than the standard 750's steel unit, and its remote reservoir increases oil capacity. Also to this end, the LTD's marvelously finished fiber-

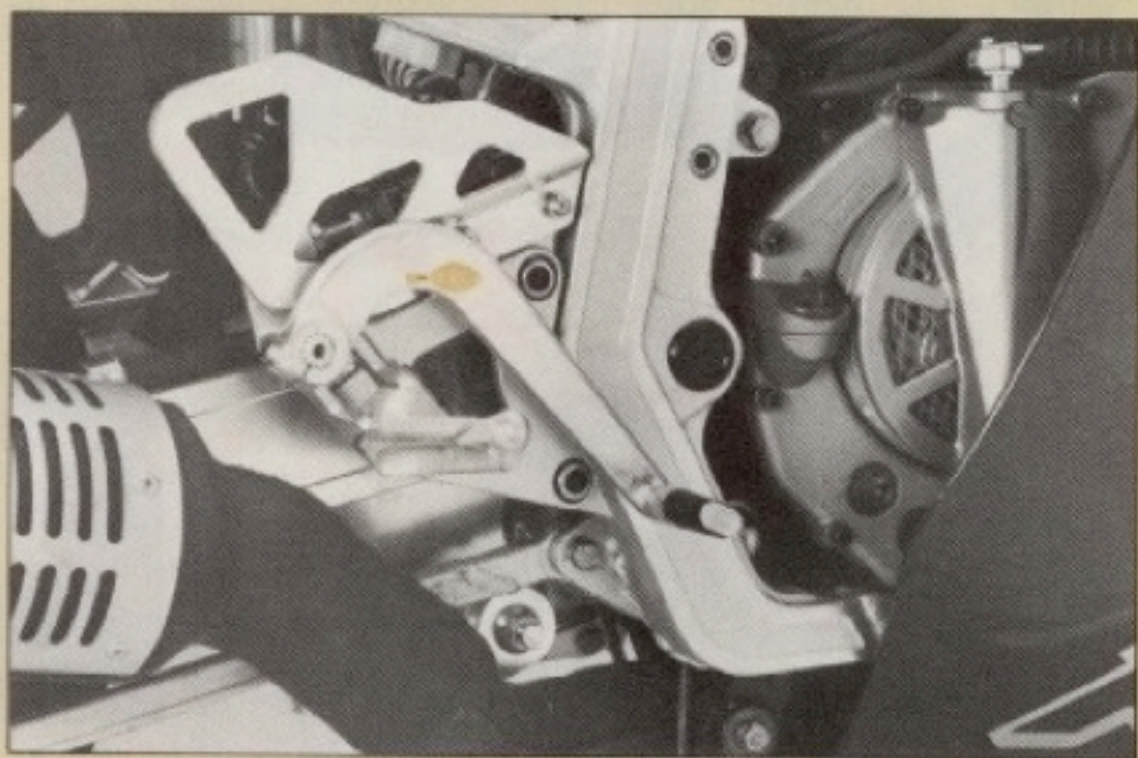
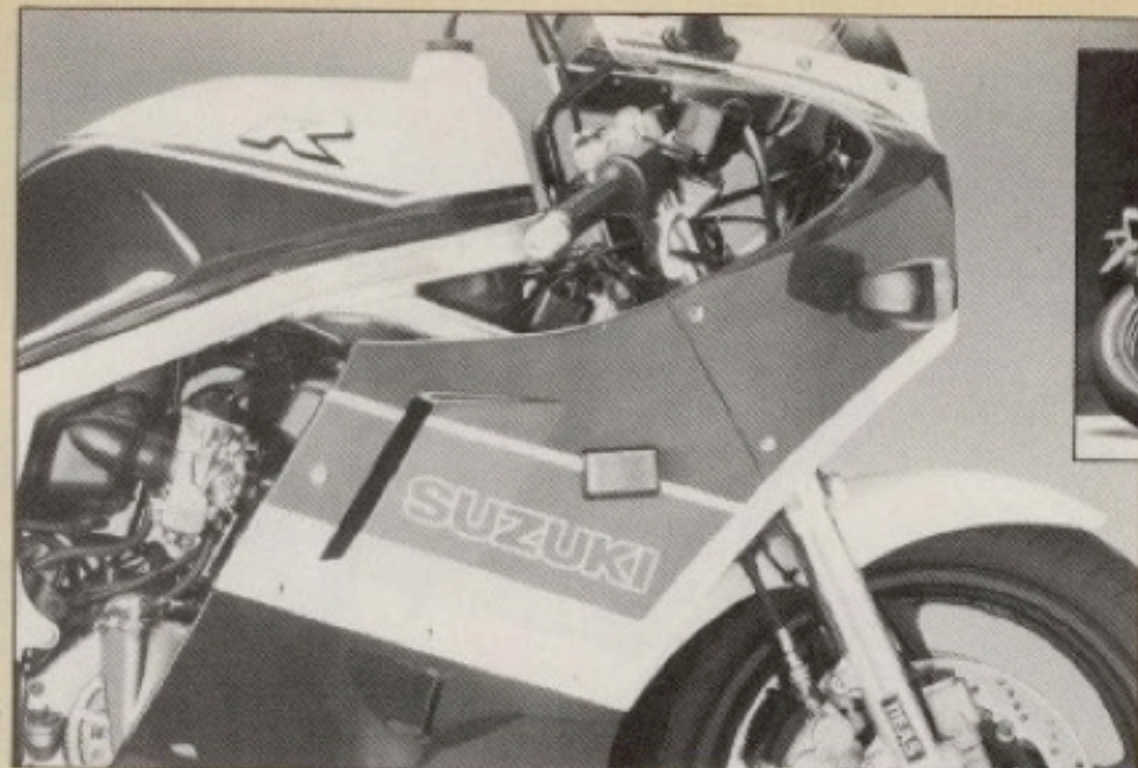
GSX-R750R LTD

glass tailpiece has high skirts to increase airflow through the Full Floater cavity.

Nothing in our portfolio of wicked mountain roads could fade the LTD's rear shock, but as delivered the Limited's handling fell short of the standard GSX's. The front was stiff, harsh over rippled pavement, and the rear felt soft and slushy and bottomed solidly over medium-sized bumps. Steering seemed flighty under acceleration, and the tires, though identical to the standard 750's, lacked bite. Something was clearly wrong.

Out came the flat-bladed screwdriver to adjust fork preload, and the spanner for the rear shock's preload collar. Forty minutes later (shock preload adjustment is a time-consuming, knuckle busting ordeal) we settled on zero preload up front, the lightest anti-dive setting, stiffened the rear preload nearly 50 percent, and dialed rebound damping to the number three of four positions.

What evil lurked in the LTD's chassis vanished without a trace. On fast, bumpy roads the front and rear suspension collaborate to keep the LTD's tires planted. The ride is racetrack firm but instantly responsive to bumps large and small, and the LTD exhibits the same implacable composure that makes the standard GSX such a formidable backroad flier. Tight, slow stuff underscores the precision of the LTD's steering, the unity of its chassis and tight driveline, and the transfixing quality of its smooth power delivery. Like the standard GSX, every control on the LTD, every rider/machine contact point is tactile, refined, unobtrusive, perfectly suited for bloody-eyed backroad blasting. In our experience, only one other motorcycle is as sensitive to proper setup as the LTD: Suzuki's own 500 Gamma. In both these machines, a twist of a preload collar can make the differ-



ence between holy-terror handling and knife-edged precision. The standard GSX, while not as sensitive to suspension alterations, handles every bit as well as the LTD until its rear shock begins to overheat.

No matter, the LTD holds several clear advantages. Its huge brakes are tremendous, solid, incredibly powerful, capable of exploiting the traction racing slicks offer. The wide, flat seat is an improvement over the standard model's spartan

TEST SPECIFICATIONS

Vital Statistics

Make and model Suzuki GSX-R750R LTD
Price \$6499

Engine

Type Four-stroke, transverse four;
air- and oil-cooled with dual
chain-driven overhead camshafts;
four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke 70.0 x 48.7mm
(2.76 x 1.92 in.)
Displacement 749cc (45.7 cu. in.)
Compression ratio 10.6:1
Transmission Six-speed, constant-mesh,
dry-clutch
Gear ratios (overall) (1) 14.46 (2) 10.75
(3) 8.61 (4) 7.31
(5) 6.42 (6) 5.74

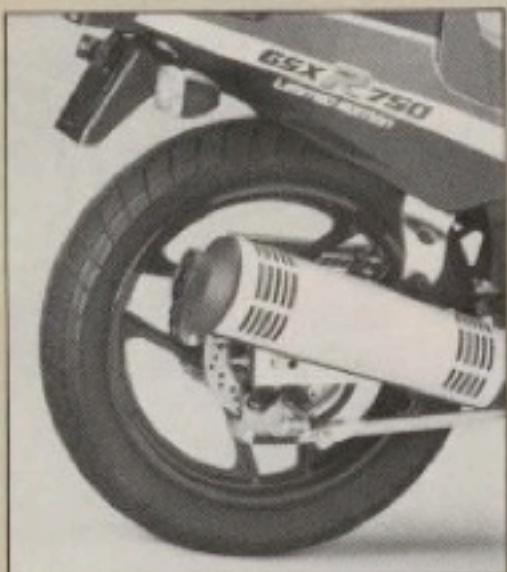
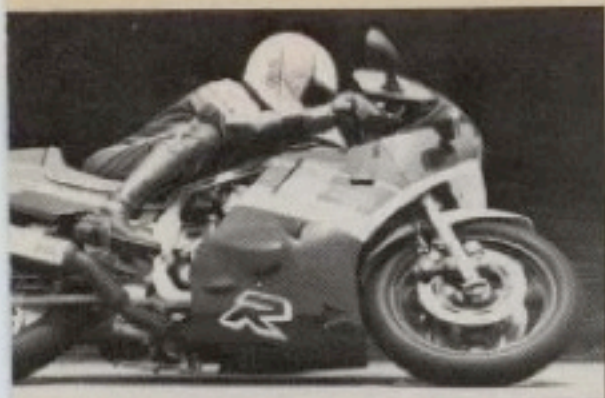
Chassis

Type Double-downtube, full-cradle aluminum
perimeter frame; box-section
aluminum swing arm
Suspension, front Center-axe, spring preload-
adjustable fork with 41mm
tubes, electronic anti-dive,
and 5.1 in. (130mm) of travel
rear (1) gas-charged shock
absorber, adjustable
for spring preload and rebound
damping, producing 5.3 in.
(134mm) of rear-wheel travel
Rake/trail 26.0°/4.2 in. (107mm)
Brake, front Hydraulic, dual-disc
with four-piston calipers
rear Hydraulic, single disc
with dual-piston caliper

Wheel, front Cast, 2.50 x 18
rear Cast, 3.50 x 18
Tire, front 110/80 VR18 Bridgestone V240
rear 140/70 VR18 Bridgestone V240
Weight (w/full tank) 459.5 lbs.
(208.4 kg)

Performance

Standing start 1/4 mile 11.28 sec. @
118.29 mph
Acceleration, 0-60 mph 2.96 sec.
45-70 mph, top gears (4) 3.92 sec., 321 ft.
(5) 4.32 sec., 356 ft.
(6) 4.85 sec., 408 ft.
Maximum speed in gears
engine redline (1) 58 (2) 78
(3) 97 (4) 114
(5) 130 (6) 146



perch, and the LTD's wider clip-on handlebars offer slightly more leverage. At speed, if you hit a large bump mid-turn the Limited can shake its head vigorously, but not violently enough to trigger four-letter expletives.

The LTD's firm highway ride, low-rpm engine hesitation, and occasional reluctance to idle will disappoint most riders, but probably not the riders who are sincerely interested in what the LTD has to offer. This machine belongs in the narrow world of screeching tires and clicking stopwatches; the LTD is wasted if it never turns a wheel on the racetrack. The \$2000 premium that turns a GSX-R into an LTD will be too stiff for most riders anyway, but for the racer, who would pay much more to duplicate the LTD's racing components, two grand is a pittance. The LTD is the real thing, the ultimate factory-prepared finish-it-yourself racer. They simply don't come off the showroom floor any closer to the racetrack than this. Or any better. ■