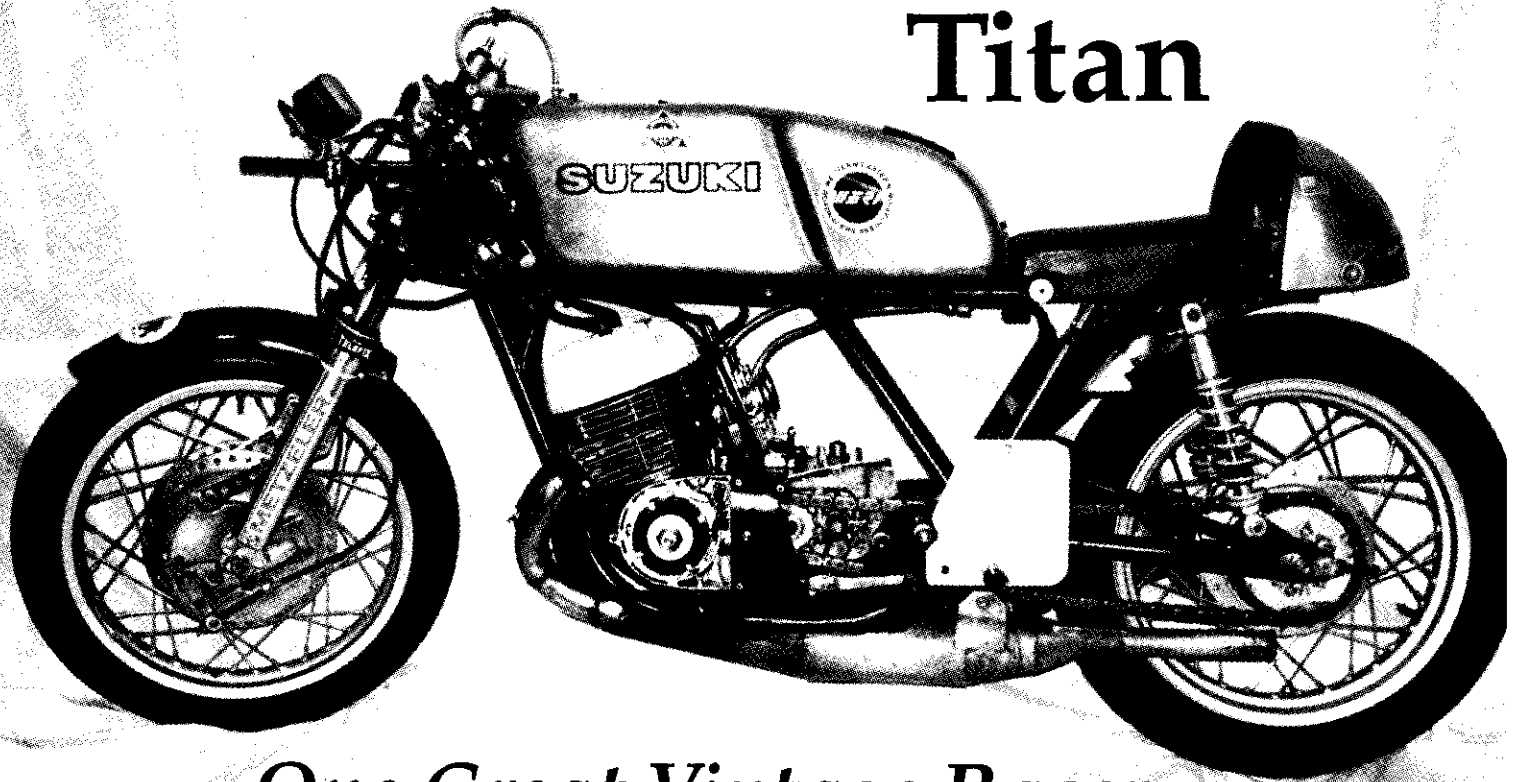


Suzuki T-500 Titan



One Great Vintage Racer by Kris Bernstein

Applying state of the art technology to new equipment results in varying degrees of improvement. Applying similar technology to old equipment can give it a new lease on life. Such is the case in preparing a vintage road racer, in this case the Suzuki T-500 Titan.

Whether your tastes are British, Italian, American, or Japanese, vintage road racing offers the chance to return to yesteryear for far less than the cost of a Superbike effort. Plus, you will probably run into some old friends who are vintage racing too.

The factory T-500 racers of 1968, or XR-05's as they were called by Suzuki, were little more than hyper-steroid versions of their street bike. Given the reliable-as-a-stone nature of its design, the T-500 lends

itself quite readily to the knee dragging motorsport. One big advantage in vintage road racing is an abundance of old parts being available along with the possibility of additional horsepower should you desire to get serious.

GETTING STARTED

Step number one is to find out which of the local vintage road racing associations governs the local races: WERA, AHRMA, FIM, or whomever. Get their rule book, study and memorize it. Pay particular attention to rules that could affect your bike, the class it will race in, and its degree of "legal" preparation. Flat-slide carbs, turbocharging, and fat, slick tires are not particularly in keeping with vintage racing.

If possible, start with a nice fresh, race-prepared bike. If you can find

one already prepped, it will save you a good bit of money. If you must torture yourself and start from scratch, so be it. Moderately priced bikes are available in any metropolitan newspaper or wrecking yard. But be aware that it may take two or three junkers to make one pristine racer.

After acquiring a good used T-500, strip it to the frame and keep the motor whole. Seeley, Harris, or Suzuki "Works" frames may be available, but be forewarned, if you bend them up, they are nearly irreplaceable. So unless you are going to build a museum piece, don't race with irreplaceable parts.

FRAME CHECK

Check to be sure your race frame is not bent or rusted. If it is in good shape, flame cut or grind off all unnecessary brackets being careful