



EXCALIBUR

British Heritage is Revived and Improved

The 1958 Ariel 500 HS featured here is one of the best examples of what can be done with a competition classic when the custom touch is added.

To retain some of the British heritage of the Ariel, owner Gary Johnson has named the bike 'Excaltor' after the historical sword of King Arthur, the sixth century king of England.

Gary traded a 1956 Chevy for the Ariel

in 1966. He wanted to accumulate enough parts from it and another HS he owned at that time to build one good machine. Gary did not plan to build a custom but rather wanted to construct a racing bike.

Both Ariels were completely stripped and the good parts from each were set aside. These parts and Gary's home-made valves (made from 292 and 352

Ford items), a Sports cam, Del'Orto TT carburetor and Girling shocks were then assembled together. The new engine was bolted back into the frame and Gary raced it for about a year. Gary soon tired of the old Ariel however, and had a desire to build something different.

Again the Ariel was pushed back into the garage for more engine work. In addition to the powerplant modifications that were to be made, Gary decided to give the old Ariel a complete facelifting.



First the frame was completely nickel plated and all fittings were replated with cadmium. The gearbox was overhauled and the original wet clutch plates were replaced with dry ones.

A new high compression piston was installed and the ports, rod and flywheels polished. On the outside, the cases were polished to a chrome-like finish. The carburetor was replaced with a Honda 450 vacuum operated Kehin model. The combustion chamber was polished for optimum performance. Gary made and



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attached an oil cooler and filter of his own design.

An 18" Akront alloy rim was laced on the back to replace the 19" steel item. The front forks were discarded for Bul-taco Matador units and a Pursang front wheel was bolted up. Rickman moto-cross handlebars and Magura levers were the last items to be bolted on.

The beautiful paint job was handled by Davie and the heli-arcing was done by Cavanah's in Reseda. A good portion of the engine and design engineering came from Paul Hunt and Kelvin Franks. Total investment came to \$800.

In the second show it appeared in, Gary's Excalibur took home first place in the Competition Bike Class at the Movieland Motor Review. After this fine showing, Gary and Excalibur will be spending most of the time at shows rather than on tracks. ●

