

# ROAD MAP

Alan Singer's beautifully restored Bultaco Metralla at Riding Into History. See Page 60.



ALAN SINGER

## FEATURES

- 10 THOSE SWEET HONDA DREAMS**  
A lucky Honda enthusiast is now the proud owner of not just one, but two 1960s twins.
- 18 EARLY AMERICAN TWIN: THOR**  
Still wearing its original paint, the 1913 Thor Model U now finds its home at the Franklin Auto Museum in Tucson, Arizona.
- 24 THE BOMB RUN**  
Writer John L. Stein takes us back some 50 years to his first-ever desert motorcycle race.
- 28 LONG LIVE THE KING: HONDA CB77**  
Building a tribute of the Super Hawk from the Elvis film *Roustabout*.
- 34 A TON OF FUN: SUPER METEOR 650**  
Royal Enfield debuts Cruiser and Tourer models powered by the 650 twin.
- 40 POWER DOWN UNDER**  
Alan Cathcart tests a Suzuki Katana P5 Racer.
- 48 VELOCETTE VIPER**  
Originally a Viper Scrambler, now a Viper Endurance.
- 54 JUST RIGHT: GILERA 175CC SPORT**  
The Gilera 175 exemplifies form following function.
- 60 COLLECTING BULTACOS**  
Collector Alan Singer walks us through a few of his more unusual models.

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 SHINY SIDE UP**  
Plan to visit The Quail Motorcycle Gathering.
- 4 READERS AND RIDERS**  
Readers chime in with feedback on bikes they've recently purchased, along with the identification of the Indian from last issue, and a request for a mentor.
- 8 ON THE RADAR**  
We look back at the 1958-1986 Honda Super Cub, along with its contenders, the Suzuki M30, and Yamaha MF-1.
- 66 BLACK SIDE DOWN**  
Old Bike Mechanizing.
- 68 CALENDAR**  
Where to go and what to do this spring and summer.
- 70 DESTINATIONS**  
Visit The Franklin Auto Museum in Tucson, Arizona.
- 80 PARTING SHOTS**  
Pocketbike Racing.

## ON THE WEB!

### **Motorcycle Classics Treasures Giveaway**

Remember the classics through the *Street Bikes of the '50s, '60s, '70s, and '80s* series, *Pre-War Perfection* and the magazine archive. Also included in this package are the MC 2023 calendar and hat. Enter for a chance to win this package valued at \$130 at [MotorcycleClassics.com/sweepstakes/treasures](https://www.MotorcycleClassics.com/sweepstakes/treasures)





# COLLECTING BULTACOS

A look at a few of the lesser-known models

Story and photos by Alan Singer

The virus lay dormant for 30 years. Then, in 2002, an eBay auction for a Bultaco Metralla appeared.

Specifically, the auction was for a Mk2 250cc Metralla, this one in European spec and located in Ontario, Canada. In a moment of weakness I bought it sight unseen, from another country, over a thousand miles away. It was then the Bultaco virus arose and seized control. There appears to be no cure.

## The beginning

Back to the start, the initial exposure. My first Bultaco, an Alpina, was purchased new at Sleger-Forbes in Hanover, New Jersey, and it served well as an enduro and trail bike for several years. Its subsequent history deserves a moto-biography of its own. In any event, life interfered with work, a dalliance with older Porsches, a bit of vintage racing (Google Turner sports cars), a move to Florida, more work, and finally retirement and

my self-gifted gold watch, the Metralla. Since then a dozen and a half Bultacos have arrived at MotoEuro Garage, and very few have left. Clearly the Bultaco virus is a real thing. Background covered, this article is to introduce a few lesser known models of the brand.

## The unusual ones

Many otherwise well-informed enthusiasts will be surprised to know that, in its 25 years, Bultaco built more than 200 models and variants. A few of the more unusual models (see *Motorcycle Classics* January/February 2023 issue for one) have found their way to my garage.

Let's first start with my Model 23T. Yes, there are a few situations where Bultaco added a suffix to define a sub-model. In this case, it designates the El Tigre as a version of the M23 Metralla Mk2. There are two versions of the story behind this model; I tend to believe this one. The Japanese were building street scramblers that were selling like hotcakes. Bultaco made pure street models and dirt bikes, and they needed a

The author's restored El Tigre Model 23T at the AMCA Winter National Meet in New Smyrna, Florida (left). The El Tigre upon arrival at MotoEuro's messy Florida garage (right).



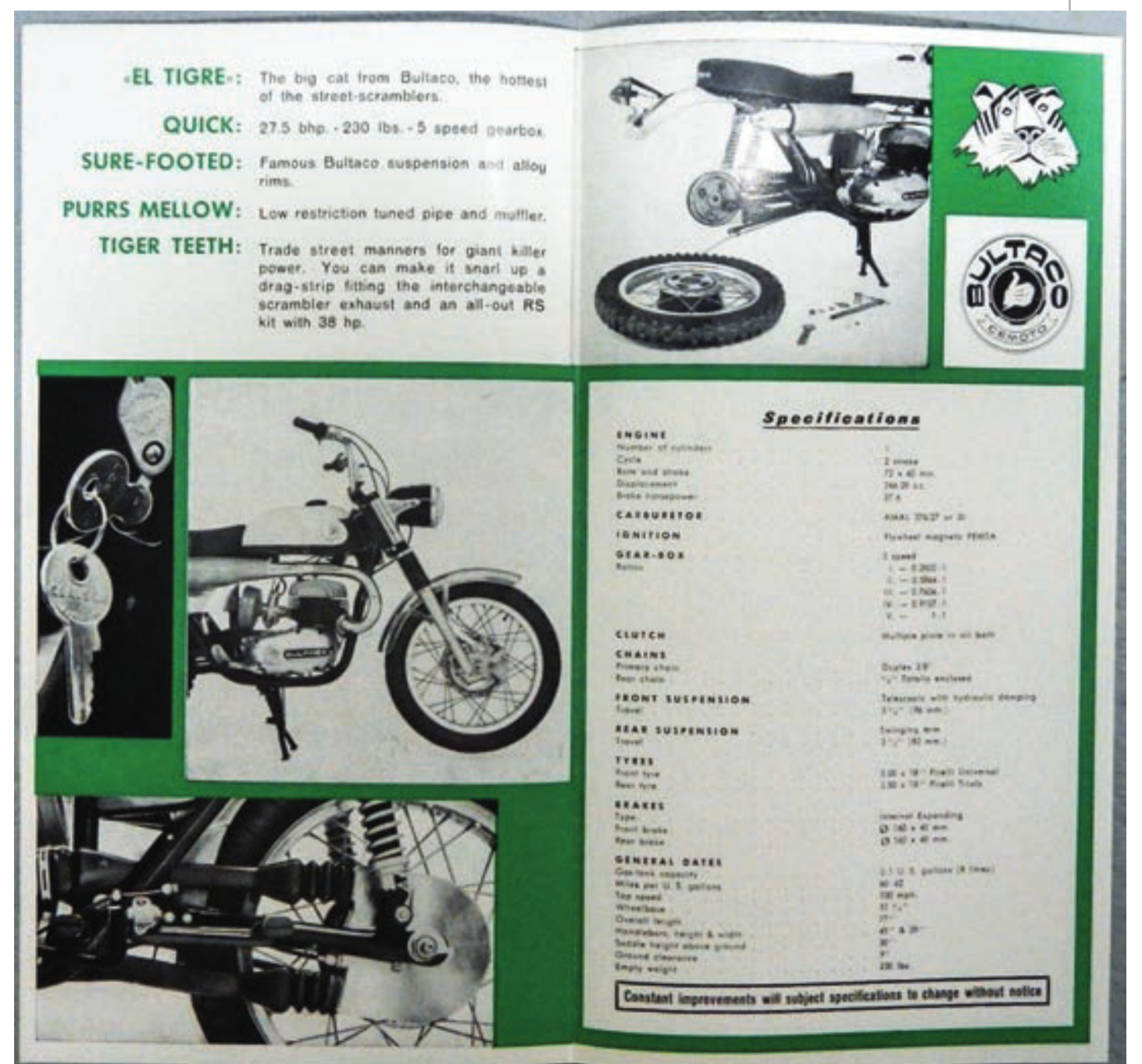
competitor for this market. The El Tigre was a bit of a parts bin special. Though basically a Metralla, the tank was from an earlier Matador, the frame was modified, alloy Sherpa fenders were added, and a new exhaust designed. Presto! Instant scrambler. In truth it, like Honda's CL250/305, was really a gussied up street bike, albeit a stylish one.

This one came to me fully restored from my friend Bill Hawes. I caught Bill in a moment of weakness and he has lamented it ever since. Bill did a great job on this bike and it received a Senior First award from the AMCA, scoring more than 99 points. These El Tigres are exceedingly rare and becoming quite valuable.

Next, we move on to the Pursang. Actually, two of them, the first and one of the last. The first, initially released in 1964, is generally referred to, somewhat controversially, as the Bultaco Metisse. In fact it originated from a failed partnership with the Rickman Brothers, which may or may not have involved litigation, depending on who is telling the tale. In any event, the frame is a copy of the Rickman but in plain steel rather than chromoly. Bultaco never called it a Pursang, though the factory parts manual refers to it as such, and its replacement

was called a Pursang Mk2. In any event, the Model 11 (every Bultaco has a model number that corresponds to its design number and is the first two or three digits of the VIN) was Bultaco's first true motocross model. Sort of. There were actually two versions, as the TT used a 19-inch front wheel and had a couple of ponies more than the 21-inch shod motocrosser. The Metisse/Pursang was unique among Bultaco motocrossers in having a double downtube frame and center exhaust port.

My TT example arrived pretty nicely restored, with a fresh Lynn Mobley engine, but wearing an incorrect and damaged green paint job, along with some fender issues and needing a lot of detail finishing. The correct color turned out to be Ford



The front and back cover of the factory El Tigre brochure from 1968 (left). Inside is a list of full specifications (right).

“The Mk9 was a one-owner, heavily weathered example that required a full restoration.”



Springtime Yellow, a far more mellow color than used by later models. It really is a classic looking motorcycle.

### One of the last

Another Pursang is the M170, a Mk9, one of the later long-travel models of the late 1970s. While 250cc Mk9s were quite popular in period, there were far fewer M170 versions. These were 200cc bikes built for a short-lived U.S.-only class mainly popular in the East. What adds to their appeal is the very attractive graphics unique to this model.

Mine came by way of a trade with a friend who wanted my 360 Frontera, a bike I was frankly too wimpy to fire up. I figured a 200 would be far easier to kick! The Mk9 was a one-owner, heavily weathered but complete example that



The author's M170 Pursang as found (top). The same Pursang after a sympathetic restoration (above left and right).



The Metisse parts book. Note the Pursang legend in a font never again used by the factory. An original advertisement for the TT Metisse.

required a full restoration. As with most of my projects, it took about a year to complete. There can't be too many of these around anymore.

### The Metralla 62

Another rare model is my M08, a first series Metralla also known as Metralla 62, named for the year of its introduction. In truth, a lot of these were built and they were very popular in Europe, the sport bikes of the era. A 200cc motorcycle capable of over 90mph was pretty heady stuff in the early 1960s. The Metralla reportedly had the legs over the contemporary 200cc Italian products and won many races. But in the U.S. at the time, there were few dealers, and most were competition oriented. Plus, this was not a beginner's bike and the price point of the Metralla was significantly above



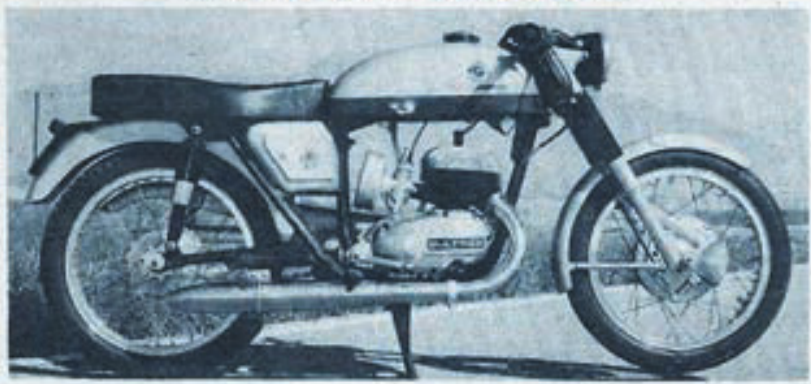
The pale yellow paint on the Bultaco TT Metisse is actually Ford Springtime Yellow. Here is the bike after its new paint job.

**BULTACO**  
CEMOTO

the finest ever!

**BULTACO**

**METRALLA ROAD SPORT**



What is your pleasure Señor?

30-31 HP ROAD RACER  
29 HP SCRAMBLER  
23 HP METRALLA  
17 HP TRAIL-ENDURO

... we also have a 125cc & 175cc Road Racer, and Scrambler if you prefer ...

DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED  
"A red hot motorcycle line, Señors!"

<p>In the East: <b>CEMOTO EAST</b> IMPORTING COMPANY 3005 Lillian Road, Schenectady, N.Y.</p>	<p>California North of San Luis Obispo and Northwestern States: <i>Cancilla Motors</i> 776 N. 13th Street, San Jose, California</p>	<p>California South of San Luis Obispo and Southwestern States: <b>BULTACO WESTERN</b> 11418 Burbank Blvd., North Hollywood, Calif.</p>
---	---	---

**BULTACO**  
CEMOTO

**METRALLA 62**

**00D-11-CW**



The U.S. importers' period advertisement for the Metralla (above left). Metralla art (above right).



The Metralla as delivered (above). The delivery driver called it "a rust bucket." The restored Metralla at the Riding Into History Motorcycle Concours d' Elegance (below).

that of its mass produced competitors.

I recall a Peter Egan column years ago wherein he asked a well-known collector which of his many bikes was his favorite to ride. He pointed to a well-used little bike in the corner, a Metralla 62. He opined that Bultaco's later, faster Mk2 had somehow lost the essence of a light, tossable corner carver and no other bike came close.

This one came from Seville by way of California. Purchased by a U.S. airman, it remained in his ownership until he passed. His widow entrusted it to a neighbor from whom I purchased the sad rusty relic after nearly fifty years of disuse. It received a VERY comprehensive restoration in which I managed to keep most all of the original parts, down to the fasteners. There are small but significant differences between domestic and U.S. export versions that needed to be kept as delivered. To honor that provenance, I retained the initial



A Factory specification sheet for the Mk 9 Matador (right). The Matador after completing a sympathetic restoration (at bottom).

Spanish registration. I'm quite proud of how this long, difficult restoration came out, especially as an amateur working in a home garage.

### The Matador Mk9

The final example for this exercise is the Matador Mk9. In the mid-1970s, Bultaco recognized their enduro line was at a crossroads. What should be the follow on to the seminal Matador SD? At the time the SD (M107) was the pinnacle of the enduro line. But it was not street legal. The Japanese had divided their lines between streetable dirt bikes and serious competition models; i.e., Yamaha DT vs. YZ, Honda XL vs. MT, etc. The Spanish answer for serious enduro work would be the Frontera, available as a 250 and a 360. Meanwhile, the Matador would be the street bike. The M140 Mk9 was developed from the ground up for the task. It featured a 350cc engine, steel fuel tank, full road equipment, battery operated lights, a large comfy seat for two, a carrier rack and more. Unfortunately, the Mk9 and its near-identical successor met with limited sales success in the U.S., largely due to the ubiquity of large Japanese brand dealers as compared to the generally small, enthusiast-run Bultaco shops. The final straw was the EPA coming down hard on 2-strokes essentially ending the importation of Spanish street bikes.

I found this Mk9 in York, Pennsylvania, on Craigslist. Relatively lightly used, it was available at a bargain price due to an engine that would not fire. It was such a good deal I blasted up there from Florida on Easter Sunday to pick it up. On the way home I dropped it off with a friend who had a vintage motorcycle hobby business and asked him to take a look at it. Thirty minutes later at home he sent me a video of it running sweetly. The ignition side of the engine had been filled with hard packed sand, once removed it fired right up. Too nice to restore, it was dismantled, detailed and reassembled with new replacements for the usual wear components. I left it stock, with the exception of replacing the clunky DOT-style controls with earlier Bultaco units.

So there you have it, a few of the lesser known Bultaco models. One thing that keeps me interested in the brand is that as a small company from an agricultural country, Bultaco fought well above its weight class, building so many varied and interesting models. Frequently, research yields tales that go well beyond the bike itself, to the heart of the brand, the sport and the industry. **MC**

*Alan Singer is an octogenarian old fart who continues to play with Bultacos in his home-based MotoEuro Garage in Jacksonville, Florida. Some of his builds have won awards and been seen in magazines. His pals remain unimpressed (still).*

## CARACTERISTICAS

**MOTOR:**  
2 tiempos y 1 cilindro 350  
Diámetro x carrera (mm.) 83.2 x 64  
Cilindrada (cc.) 347.95  
Relación de compresión 8.5:1  
Potencia máxima (HP @ rpm.) 21.60 @ 6.500

**CARBURADOR:** BING 28

**CAMBIO:**  
5 velocidades en toma constante  
I 0.287:1 - II 0.442:1 -  
III 0.625:1 - IV 0.821:1 -  
V 1:1

**ENCENDIDO:** Magneto alternador a volante

**TRANSMISIONES:** Per cadenas  
Duplex  
Especial 55  
Cadena primaria 3/8"  
Cadena secundaria 5/8"

**EMBRAGUE:** Discos múltiples en baño de aceite

**SUSPENSIONES**  
con amortiguadores hidráulicos  
Delantera Telescópica 165 mm.  
Trasera Basculante

**NEUMATICOS DE TRIAL:**  
Delantera 2.75 x 21"  
Trasero 4.00 x 18"

**FRENOS** de expansión interna  
Delantera y Trasero 140 x 30 mm.

**MEDIDAS GENERALES:**  
Largo total 2050 mm.  
Distancia entre ejes 1360 mm.  
Altura y Anchura manillar 1055 x 880 mm.  
Altura sillín 829 mm.  
Altura mínima 255 mm.  
Altura estribos 308 mm.  
Capacidad depósito 11.5 litros  
Peso en vacío 116 kgs.

RESERVAR EL DERECHO DE INTRODUCIR CUALQUIER MODIFICACION

## SPECIFICATIONS

**ENGINE:**  
2 stroke & 1 cylinder 350  
Bore and stroke (mm.) 83.2 x 64  
Displacement (cc.) 347.95  
Compression ratio 8.5:1  
Bhp @ rpm. 21.60 @ 6500

**CARBURETER:** BING 28

**GEARBOX:**  
5 speed in constant-mesh  
I 0.287:1 - II 0.442:1 -  
III 0.625:1 - IV 0.821:1 -  
V 1:1

**IGNITION:** Flywheel magneto

**TRANSMISSIONS:** By chains  
Duplex  
Especial 55  
3/8" Primary chain  
5/8" Secondary chain

**CLUTCH:** Multiple plates in oil bath

**SUSPENSIONS**  
with hydraulic dampening  
Front Telescopic 6 1/2"  
Rear Swinging arm

**TRIAL TYRES:**  
Front 2.75 x 21"  
Rear 4.00 x 18"

**BRAKES** internal expansion  
Front and rear 140 x 30 mm.

**GENERAL DETAILS:**  
Overall length 80.7"  
Wheelbase 53.54"  
Handlebars, height and width 41.53" x 34.64"  
Seat height 32.63"  
Ground clearance 8.85"  
Footrest height 12.12"  
Gas-Tank capacity 2.5 imp. gallons  
Empty weight 255.7 lbs.

CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT WILL SUBJECT SPECIFICATIONS TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

## MATADOR MK9



COMPANIA ESPAÑOLA DE MOTORES, S. A.  
San Adrián de Besós - Barcelona - SPAIN

C.R.I.T. - Dep. Legajo: B. 46228-75  
Printed in Spain

Modelo n.º 140 Art.º 140.34-001

