



My name is Alan. I am an addict. I have become hooked on Bultacos. This is the sordid tale of my downfall...

It began as a lark, as these things do. It was back in '72. After a few Japanese trail bikes, I was seduced by a shiny blue Bultaco Alpina. I happily rode it for several years, even modifying it with some Sammy Miller exotica. Life happened and the bike was parked for a couple of decades. While moving house I gave the Alpina to my best friend to serve as his son's first big bike.

But soon the cravings began, so when said son moved on to bigger (if not better), I reacquired the bike and embarked on my first ever restoration of a motorcycle, or of anything really. It came out pretty nice, ran OK, and won a show trophy or two. This was 25 years ago; subsequently I found that having had a taste, I needed ever more.

A couple of years later, I fell for a Euro-spec Metralla Mk2, unbothered that it was in Canada some 2000 miles away. I had always admired Metrallas, had even owned an example briefly in the late 70s. Heart pounding, I hit the enter button and unseen I now had Bultaco number two. It was better than expected and came with a bunch of spares, a sure come-on to set the hook deeper.

There followed a brief dalliance with a pair of 360 project bikes that kept me going until I came upon a Sammy Miller Hi-Boy, a very rare sight in the States. The price was reasonable, the bike had interesting provenance, but



Metrallas on display



needed a lot of work. The restoration took a year but the result was spectacular.

A bit later a soon-to-be-friend listed a gorgeously restored '69 El Tigre on eBay. If you've not heard of one, it is essentially a street scrambler based on the Metralla, built to compete with bikes like the DT-1. When it didn't sell, we made contact and a deal was done. To give you an idea of the quality, the El Tigre when judged by the Antique Motorcycle Club of America scored 99.75 points and won a Senior Award.

Then a mid-70s Matador Mk9 showed up in Pennsylvania at a bargain price. 48 hours later my trailer was parked in front of the seller's home. The Matador was dirty and not running, but had great bones. Cleaning the mud (!) out from around the stator proved to be all it took to get it running sweetly. I stripped it down, repainted the frame and, retaining the original paintwork and most of the hardware, renovated it. The Mk9 is more of a street enduro than earlier models, being a bit heavier and 350 powered with road legal lighting. They were never very popular over here so finding a nice one is quite difficult.

In California there was an early Metralla, a



Bultaco Pursang and Métisse on show together



1964 four-speed 200 that had an interesting story. Purchased in Spain, it was first registered in Madrid by a US Airman. He brought it home, a couple of years later it stopped running and was parked. Forty years later, his estate came to be sold and it included the Metralla. Time had not been kind. Although very original, it was badly attacked by the rust worm. This was the most difficult restoration I faced, as I was determined to save as many of the original parts as possible. It did in fact turn out

spectacularly, if I say so myself.

What came next? Oh yes, the Streaker. One of the final 2-stroke Bultacos sold in the States – supposedly only 28 were imported. A radically different bike, the Streaker. While it's only a 125, this machine has specs that echo Bultaco's GP



The Sammy Miller Bultaco, and the man himself advertising it



Advertising for the Matador was interesting too



How's about this? The remarkably named Bultaco Streaker!

bikes: a trellis frame, mag wheels, disc brakes, etc, and all under 200lb wet. I found mine in Tennessee. It had only 700 miles from new, but had some damage to the swinging arm and sidestand plus some other 'shelf wear'. A subsequent repair and deep detailing revealed one of the nicest original examples left.

There was another rare late Bultaco to be found in the US; the Metralla GTS, of which apparently only six made it in in 1976. For three years I tried to buy a very nasty example located nearby, only to be spurned by a fellow I can only describe as a hoarder ('I'll get to it someday...'). But I really needed a fix. A GTS would give me a full set of all four Metralla variants. I. Must. Have. This. And so it was, sourced out of Spain, shipped via air from the UK, delivered in the nicest crate I have ever seen, held together by a thousand dry wall nails. Not quite as nice as the seller described, but hey, you can't win 'em all, right?

Sometime shortly after, a Bultaco Métisse, the offspring of a brief Rickman-Bultaco affair, became available nearby. It was the subject of a previous mild restoration, but the green paint was damaged by a fuel leak. That did not bother me as it actually should be yellow. This particular one was the TT version with 19" front wheel and a couple of extra Spanish ponies. It had led a long and hard racing life and it bore its scars with honour, so for the most part they remain, but the noble old steed looks great to my eyes now in the proper finish.

A few years earlier a friend and I trekked to Ohio and upstate NY to pick up a Kawasaki Scrambler for him and a Frontera 360 for me.



El Tigre!

done. The Pursang became my next effort. As usual, it consumed a year or so of part time garage work. In forty-five years this little MXer has never left our city, except for the odd out of town race.

Sitting in my shed for half a dozen years was a forlorn Campera; a 175 trail bike from 1971. Camperas are not particularly desirable, but this one was cheap and a good friend lived nearby to pick it up and get down to Florida. I really had no plan for it, but I also had no projects. I was Jonesing for another fix.

Fifteen years ago I had helped my previously mentioned best friend, newly relocated to FL, in the building of an award winning and ridiculously fast BMW café racer. I thought, how about a Bultaco café racer?

It was a pretty nice, mostly original bike, but I soon determined that, in my seventies, I was not man enough for it. Meanwhile a good friend had acquired a late model Pursang 200 motocrosser; a one owner bike, original, complete, but well weathered. Too much of a project for him; but as a young sixtyish fellow he coveted the Frontera, so a deal was



Alan's Café Racer – a 'sliced and diced' Campera

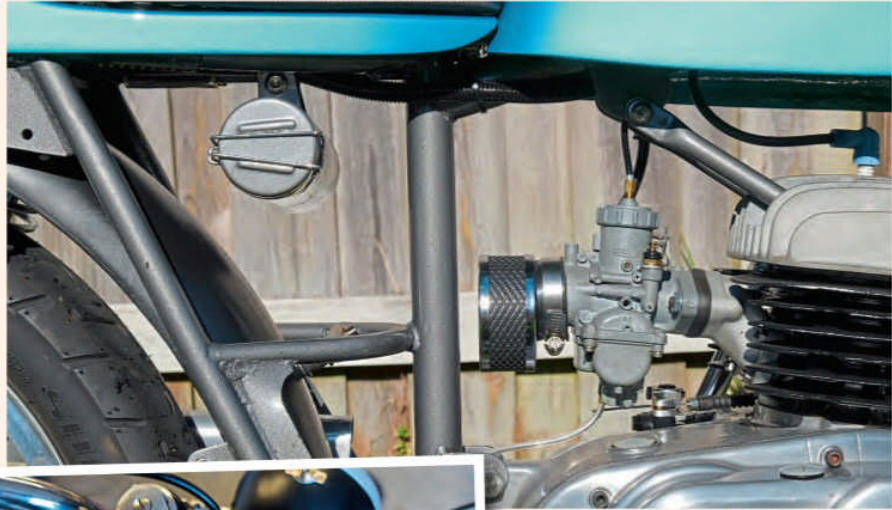
And so it was. The Campera was sliced and diced, parts from a dozen different Bultaco models (most from my decades old stash) were added. I traded for a 250 road race modified motor. With far more effort and cost than I ever expected, it was done. It is quite the runner; under 200lb, with around 35bhp. It's a quick little begger.

And so we come to 2020, our year of the virus, and my year of nothing to work on. Or is it? A call from Pennsylvania, from the nice fellow who sold me the Mk9 Matador, presented another 'opportunity'. He had a Mk5 Matador Six Days, without question the pinnacle of Bultaco's competition enduro line. It was original and had all the hard to find bits; the watch holder, route sheet roller, etc. It was also more than my budget could stand. A couple of months passed, the price dropped and he included every Bultaco related item he owned. And boy, did he have a lot of stuff. Selling off some of it made the deal workable.

Once again, a flying trip north, this time in the midst of the lockdown. On my bench as I write this, is a freshly painted frame with suspension, awaiting everything else as the restoration continues.

Where will it end? Who knows? There is no seven step program for Bultaco junkies. Even if I wanted get clean... **Rc**

CAFÉ RACER DETAILS



Alan Singer and his café racer

