



SPANISH

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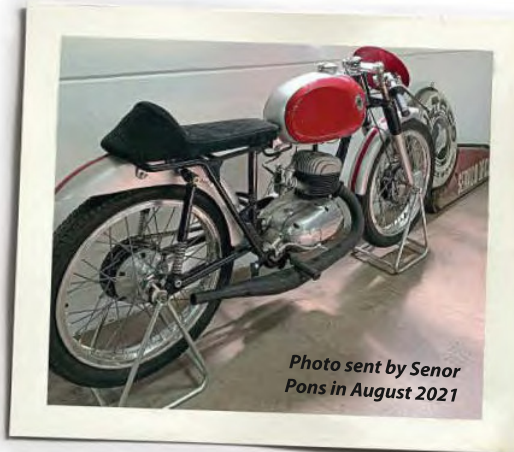
Back in RC202, Alan Singer admitted his addiction to Bultaco motorcycles. Now he updates us with his further adventures in the wide world of the sizzling Spanish strokers...

Photos by Alan Singer, RC RChive, Mortons archive

Back in pandemic times a nice man in Spain advertised a Bultaco Mercurio for sale.

While a little rough, it was cheap. Unfortunately, arranging shipment here in the US proved prohibitively expensive and complicated. Said Spanish gentleman, Albert Pons, connected me with a local shipping company that offered the service for roughly a third the price. Putting this together took a few weeks; by the time I determined it was a viable approach, the bike was sold.

Senor Pons, it seems, was in the process of thinning a collection he and his father had amassed over decades; hundreds of Spanish motorcycles. When the Mercurio deal fell through he offered me a choice of several others. One stuck out, a Bultaco I was unfamiliar with. It was a very early road racer called a Tralla Sport. I have been dabbling in Bultacos for half a century, yet knew nothing of



this model.

A bit of research and some information from Albert was all it took to make me want this little bike. The shipping took longer, was more complicated and expensive than anticipated, but not onerously so. In October of 2021 a van dropped a large crate in my driveway and the real fun began.

Albert had sent me a video of it running before draining fluids for its sea voyage. It

sounded sweet. The motorcycle was every bit as nice as I hoped and as the photos indicated. It had just enough patina to display a bit of its past. At some point in its past, probably in the early 1990s, it had been refreshed for historic racing. Though very original, much of the hardware was replaced with newer 'improved' pieces.

Most folks know that Bultaco used specially marked bolts. But that was only on the later models. Prior to 1964 the bolts were from a Spanish firm that marked them FAS. Let me tell you, if you think

it's difficult to find 'BULTACO' bolts, these things are like unicorn poop. Fortunately, I had a few from a previous project and the Bultaco Facebook group came through with just enough more. That done, some polish, a pipe repair, and a good detailing was all the old warhorse needed.

Now came the fun, determining exactly what a Tralla Sport was, and what



The bike in the Pons Museum, and the museum itself



Tralla Evolution

was its role in the marque's history. The following is the result of several months deep diving into the interweb, scouring period and current books and magazines, following up on queries to various sources, contact with historians, collectors, and even some who were at the factory 60 years ago. In the end I assembled a scrapbook of sorts, some 30 pages of information related to the Tralla Sport.

It turns out that Bultaco built the Tralla Sport, also now referred to as the TS, for three years, from 1959 to 1961. There were probably about 16 built in total, put together in three batches. Each year's version was improved and updated to remain competitive. FX Bulto was first and foremost a racer. So the first TS, essentially a tuned production machine, was developed and built in the original factory race shop just months after the company's inception. Race shop is a bit of a misnomer, it was little more than a garage on the farm that was the first factory site.

Mine is a 1961 machine, the final

version, a pure roadracer. At the end of 1961 the TS was replaced by the much better known and highly successful TSS. If you've wondered what that stood for, it's Tralla Super Sport.

My primary quest was to document the three years of the TS, pieces of which existed but which had, as far as I know, never been compiled. In April 1959, just weeks after the launch of the Tralla, one finished second at Montjuic. A month later, the Tralla S debuted with a victory at the International Trophy Cannes. This began a successful run wherein the brand won the 125cc class in 30 major races that year. 1960 saw the victory total over 50 races.

There were five riders, loosely considered the factory riders, who compiled the majority of the wins. John Grace, a Gibraltarian, was part of Bulto's initial design team. He served as lead rider and then team manager, while also establishing an early dealership in Malaga. In 1960 he achieved a great result finishing second in the Spanish GP, just 0.3 seconds behind the

great Luigi Taveri on his MV Agusta.

Mauricio Aschi left Montesa to join Grace at Bultaco. He gave the TS its finest victory. In 1961, riding the third variation of the TS, he won the Sport Nacional Class at the Spanish GP at Circuit Jarama.

The third rider of note was Francisco Valera, a factory technician. 'Bambi' worked in the racing department from early 1960 until the factory closed in 1984. He partnered with Juan Sobrepera ('Tiger') to finish eighth overall, first in class at the Montjuic 24 hour race aboard their Tralla Sport.

Sobrepera ran an official Bultaco service centre in Sabadell. He took on an aspiring racer as an apprentice to



The bike in Spain, being prepared for shipping





The Bultaco's arrival in Florida

his shop. The young man was Ramon Torras, who would go on to become one of Spain's greatest racers in his brief but brilliant career. Sobrepera and Torras shared a TS, winning the 125cc class at the 1961 Belguim FIM endurance race. It was Torras' first international race and Tiger's last.

Torras was just 19 when he delivered Bultaco's first championship, winning the RFMC national crown in 1962. This turned out to be the final major win for the Tralla Sport. Though still competitive in local events, the factory riders moved to the new TSS. It was on the TSS that Torras, in 1963, began racing in the world championships. Prior to his unfortunate death in a multi-



Tralla Sport on display at the 2-Stroke Show, in 2022

TRALLA ON TRACK



Ramon Torras



Torras at Montjuic



John Grace at Barcelona GP in 1959.



"TIGER" (Bultaco) 1.º absoluto en la Subida en Cuesta de Santa Cruz de Olorde

Sensacional escalada de Ramón Torres sobre "Ducan"



...valor que aguantar la lluvia durante toda la mañana.
 El vencedor absoluto fue el subdesarrollado «T», pero con una Bultaco 125 c.c. de competición, en una subida, nada apurata y sin tiempo. En segundo lugar por orden de llegada se clasificó el «Ducan» de 125 c.c. el cual, aunque muy avanzado en su carrera, no pudo superar el primer escalón de la subida.
 En este momento adelantamos los nuevos resultados. Hemos de decir realmente una demostración de sus posibilidades, realizada en la categoría de 125 c.c. por obra de Francisco Fernández.
 En la categoría de 125 c.c. torras de esta es el vencedor. Una victoria, nada, entre los detalles de las marcas Bultaco, Minibaco y Luchador, realizadas en Montjuic, Barcelona, Cataluña, el día de hoy, cuando se celebró la carrera en la Cuesta de Santa Cruz de Olorde, organizada por el Club Atlético de Euz. La victoria, nada, entre los detalles de las marcas Bultaco, Minibaco y Luchador, realizadas en Montjuic, Barcelona, Cataluña, el día de hoy, cuando se celebró la carrera en la Cuesta de Santa Cruz de Olorde, organizada por el Club Atlético de Euz. La victoria, nada, entre los detalles de las marcas Bultaco, Minibaco y Luchador, realizadas en Montjuic, Barcelona, Cataluña, el día de hoy, cuando se celebró la carrera en la Cuesta de Santa Cruz de Olorde, organizada por el Club Atlético de Euz.

Coca-Cola refresca mejor



Victory for the Tiger

Left: Juan Sobrepera at Montjuic

bike accident not of his making, he was Bultaco's fastest and most successful rider.

The new TSS was extremely successful and was sold in relatively large numbers, at least for a racebike. Bultaco moved on, developing 250 and 350 versions, eventually water cooling them. The TSS brought victories and glory to the firm.

As for the Tralla Sport, immediately obsolete, it was quickly forgotten. How many survived is open for conjecture. A handful perhaps, but they represent Bultaco's first foray into road racing, and a successful one too. It is time for these little racers to get their just due. **RC**



Bultaco in the living room