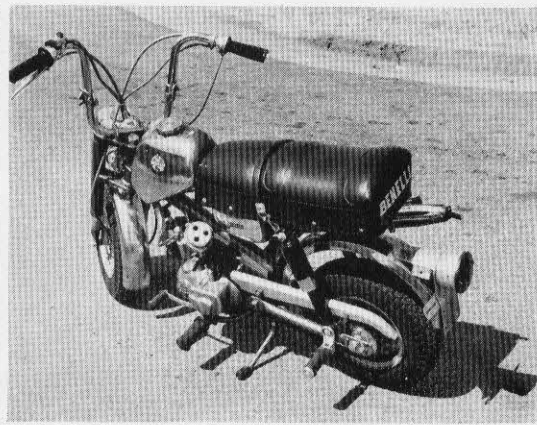
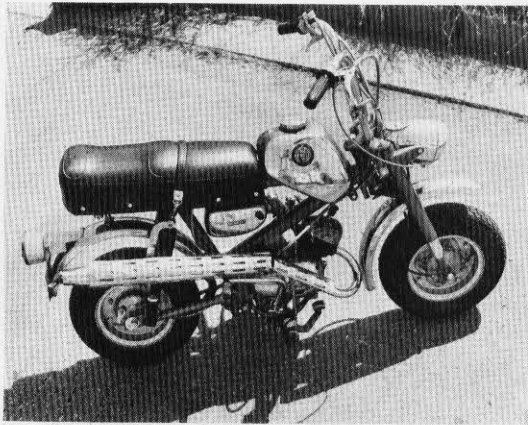


BENELLI DYNAMO COMPACT

Chapter Two: Enter The Mincing Dandy



AFTER THE BONANZA bombard, what is there? Is anything left, minibike-wise, surviving in the overkill rubble after the Double-Looped-Chrome-Piped-Hyperscooter has rumbled its way back to San Jose?

Indeed there is, boys and girls, and it's even more fun than playing "Doc-tor." The Benelli Dynamo Compact. This mini has some features until now reserved only for big bikes. And even though the Benelli engine has half as much displacement and one less ratio in the transmission than its competitor, it has its compensating virtues.

The Dynamo is very stylish. It appears to be designed more as a miniature motorcycle than a child's plaything. Note the 8-in. wheels. These are larger than wheels found on other minis, and on top of that, the factory offers knobby-tired 10-inchers as an option. Also, the frame seems very sturdy. It is made of large diameter tubing welded into a basic triangular configuration. This allows the engine to be slung lower and more forward in the chassis, consequently, better weight distribution. Front and rear brakes are provided, both of the internal expanding variety. They are strong and progressive and capable of locking either wheel at speed without being overly sensitive.

The rear hub also accommodates a

rubber biscuit type cushion to absorb driveline shocks, a feature rare on minis.

Another virtue is the seating position. The seat itself is large and comfortable and, combined with the lowish pegs and high bars, affords the rider a very relaxing attitude. Passenger pegs are also provided, and considering the bike's size, two-up riding is not too uncomfortable.

For a mere 50-cc powerplant, the Benelli engine is quite industrious. It's bore and stroke are well oversquare at 49 mm by 39 mm. The engine is not highly tuned, as it will poke along at what seems barely faster than a complete stop. Nor does it tend to load up at slow running. A tiny Dellorto carburetor mixes the fuel, and a flywheel magneto supplies electricity, while straight-cut primary gears and a multi-disc wet clutch relay power to the transmission. For all of its three cubic inches, the engine proved a willing workhorse capable of taking two people to 30 mph or a solo rider to about 40 mph. Care must be taken to keep that front wheel on the ground. Clutching is not needed for wheelies, particularly in first gear. Just a little impatience at the twistgrip will do the job. And still, the rider must be very careful not to slide too far back on the seat, as the short (37 in.) wheelbase is

highly sensitive to weight distribution.

The Dynamo's handling is surprisingly akin to that of a motorcycle, particularly off the pavement. Understandably, street riding invites a few stunts. But thanks to those big wheels, surface irregularities don't affect the Benelli as much as most other minis. Regardless, one should bear in mind that Knieveling around the highways and countryside on a mini should be done with caution.

The Dynamo Compact also sports an array of big bike features. It has a dimmer switch, kill button, odometer as well as speedometer, tool kit and stop light actuated by either brake. We might mention too that the handlebars can be folded down in order to fit more easily into your car-boat-plane.

The benefits of such a completely appointed machine are obvious (remembering, of course that it's *still* a mini-bike). The machine is light, portable, relatively well performing and street legal. It's not the fastest mini available, but it's far from being the slowest. And while you may not be immediately struck with its styling, you must admit it's one of the very few that are styled at all. Sure, with all that chrome, polished aluminum and pretty blue paint it looks foppishly fragile, but it's not. It is an excellent toy. 