

Twistgrip

La Guzzi vita

By: Adrian Blake

For the uninitiated, Brevia is the name given to the southerly wind that blows over Lake Como and brings good weather with it. Perhaps ironically, over the handful of days that I had a chance to road test the 2007 Moto Guzzi Brevia V 1100, the weather was mostly wet and confined me to sorties around the city.



Which is probably just as well since the press version of this naked sport tourer was bereft of the accessories needed for touring like the (optional) panniers, top box, windshield and heated grips.

While circumstances were a little disappointing at the outset, they didn't put a damper on my expectations. The Corsa Red Guzzi (reflecting the colour of the marque's racing success), as it turned out, felt right at home on urban asphalt.

There's no doubting the beauty of the Brevia, from its large oval headlight and sculpted gas tank with rounded side panels to the cluster of round LED lights on its upswept tail. Its aggressive style and flowing lines make it look fast just standing still.

The Brevia is based on the design of the most successful naked tourer to come out of the factory at Mandello del Lario, the V7 Special. Produced in the late 1960s, the V7 was powered by a 757-cc version of the transverse 90-degree V-twin that's been a Moto Guzzi staple for over a half century.

The company itself has been around since 1921, and is proudly identified by its eagle logo (designed to commemorate a friend who was to become the third partner in the company, but was killed in an air accident). In later years, the company went through a series of organizational and ownership changes before being fully acquired by the Piaggio Group in 2004.

When you punch the starter, the bike comes alive with an ever-so-slight sway as the engine catches and the 2-into-1 exhaust emits an easily recognizable thumping exhaust note.

Claimed power of 86 hp at 7,500 rpm gives it enough oomph to send me smartly down

the serpentine Don Valley Parkway. Power delivery is remarkably low vibration until you reach the highest rpm bands. During rush hour, its 85 Nm at 6,800 rpm allowed me to nimbly navigate a clutch of cagers with plenty of torque.

The latter is thanks to the Weber-Marelli fuel injection. It stands out for its ability to provide smooth acceleration where injected bikes will typically stumble in low-speed traffic situations. It features a stepper motor to ensure easier starting and more consistent idling.

The Breva was engineered using Moto Guzzi's patented reactive shaft final drive, which displays none of the jerkiness associated with shaft drives when the throttle is open and closed.

Clutch play was pleasingly light (although you may notice the noise from the dry clutch when it's pulled in, which is typical of Guzzis) The six-speed gearbox was a delight to shift through, especially from first to second, while finding neutral was a breeze.

The chassis is made from chrome-moly steel tubing which, combined with an aluminum single-sided swingarm, offers a rigidity that's key to sure-footed handling. Rear suspension features a monoshock with adjustable rebound and preload that's easily dialled up by hand. The Breva's front end sports a beefy 45 mm telescopic fork with spring preload adjustment.

The Breva scoots down the road on sturdy three-spoke light alloy wheels. Its 17-in. rims carry a 120/70 tire up front and a 180/55 tire out back. Braking chores are handled by a powerful combination of two 320 mm floating discs clamped by big Gold Series Brembo four-pot calipers and a single 282 mm disc grabbed by two-pot calipers at the rear.

I appreciated the upright and relaxed seating position. Both (adjustable) handlebars and pegs were well positioned. A passenger, who was all of 6 1/2 ft. tall and over 200 lbs, found the pillion seat wide and supportive with conveniently located and ample grab rails.

The instrument cluster features a large round speedometer in the centre, unusually located for a Guzzi, flanked either side by a rev counter and an analogue gas gauge. There are two tripmeters (that can be toggled from the handlebar), a clock, and temp gauge.

Every time I fired up the Breva, but especially at night, I was dazzled by the colourful array of marker lights displayed above the speedo. The gauges themselves are lit up by a high-tech red glow that's particularly effective when it's dark.

There's a generous 23-litre gas tank for long-distance touring. At the end of the tour, there's a convenient centre stand to help you clean the bike. That's in keeping with Moto Guzzi tradition. The company was the first motorcycle brand to equip its bikes with a centre stand.

This is one motocicletta with style, comfort, and performance that should make it a serious contender in the sport touring comparos in 2007.

2007 MOTO GUZZI BREVA V1100

Engine: Air-cooled, four-stroke 90 degrees V-twin

Displacement: 1,064 cc

Fuel System: Weber-Marelli FI

Transmission: Six-speed

Brakes (Brembo), Front: dual 320 mm disc, 4-piston caliper

Rear: single 282 mm disc, 2-piston caliper

Seat height: 800 mm (31.5 in.)

Fuel Capacity: 23.0 litres (5.9 gal.)

Dry Weight: 231 kg (509 lbs.)

MSRP: \$15,995