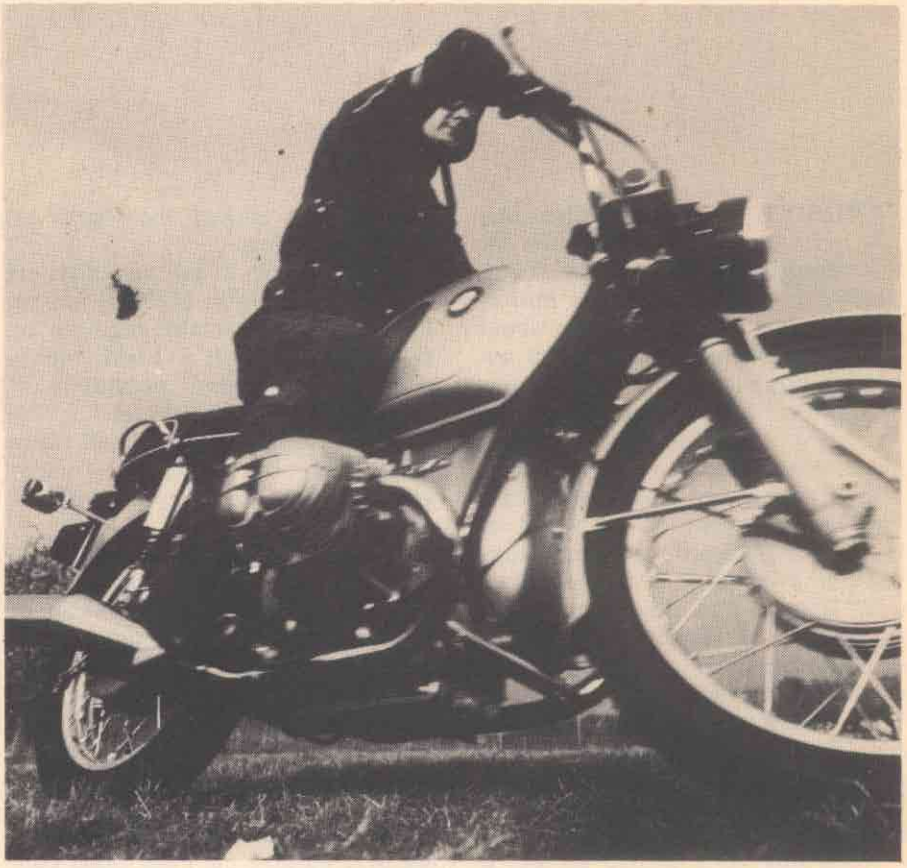
After thoroughly checking out one of the new line of BMWs, the only thing we can say to BMW is

You've Come A Long Way, Baby



Its sleek new appearance, lighter weight, and more powerful engine turns the new R60/5 into a mobile "street enthusiasts" machine.

THERE'S AN OLD saying that goes something like "don't mess with a good thing." Ever since BMW went into motorcycle production 46 years ago, they have pioneered many good things that have proven to be sound and in many cases infallible. They made shaft-driven motorcycles a reality and proved this system to be foolproof and virtually maintenance free. They also nurtured a reputation for reliability, minimum internal engine problems and easy starting.

Their last line, which included the R50, the R60 and the R69 US, lasted a total of 15 years, gaining more popularity and *aficionados* with each consecutive year. BMW became the byword for touring comfort and long term troublefree excellence. It was the quality crafted jewel of the motorcycle world.

In spite of all this there was one very important thing lacking, particularly in terms of the American youth market which comprises a large percentage of the market. The one thing lacking was sheer speed. Top speed on the older R60 was 90 mph. When compared to the speeds of some of our present day supercycles, you can see that the old BMs just couldn't hack it.

So BMW retired to the drawing boards. Under the able leadership of Hans-Gunther von der Marwitz, chief design engineer, the whole BMW line was re-evaluated and redesigned. The culmination of their efforts were introduced recently to the public in the form of three completely new redesigned models—the R50/5, the R60/5 and the big gun in the line, the R75/5. Check our February issue for a complete technical analysis of the new bikes.

We originally were hot on testing the R75/5, since this was the fastest model. But Mike Bondy of Butler and Smith told us that they weren't in yet. In fact, the *only* model available in this country at the time was already loaned out for testing. However, he told us that an R60/5 was sitting in the shop at Bulter and Smith and we were welcome to it.

The following Saturday found editor Joe Oldham, in his brand new size 64 SUPERCYCLE jacket and two handpicked members of the SUPERCYCLE test staff—handpicked for their strength, enabling them to pick up Oldham and place him on

bikes to be tested—on their way to the test grounds.

The first thing we noticed was the obvious change in appearance. Here was a completely new BMW, a cleaner, sleeker looking machine. The only similarity to the older models was in the engine, which retained some of the the same structural and design characteristics. Here the similarity ended.

The new engine has gone through some internal changes despite the fact that the layout—horizontally opposed 2-cylinder engine mounted transversely in the frame—has been retained. The aluminum cylinders are molecularly bonded to cast-iron sleeves. This results in improved heat dissipation and less weight.

These alloy cylinder heads contain hemispherical combustion chambers housing overhead valves actuated through a chain-driven camshaft located beneath the crankshaft. The placement of the camshaft allows for maximum road clearance which in turn adds to the improved handling and cornering characteristics of the R60/5.

The engine utilizes the same stroke as the other two new engine models. Only the bore is different. At 6600 rpm, this engine pumps out 46 horses, an increase of slightly over 50% over its former counterpart, the R60, which delivered a maximum of 30 horses.

Carburetion on the R60/5 model is provided by two Bing slide-type carburetors with a 26mm throats, and removable concentric float housings. The inclined carburetors are attached to the cylinder head with a clamp ring. Fuel flowing into the float bowls is kept at a constant level by means of the plastic double floats, which actuate the float needle valves through couplings.

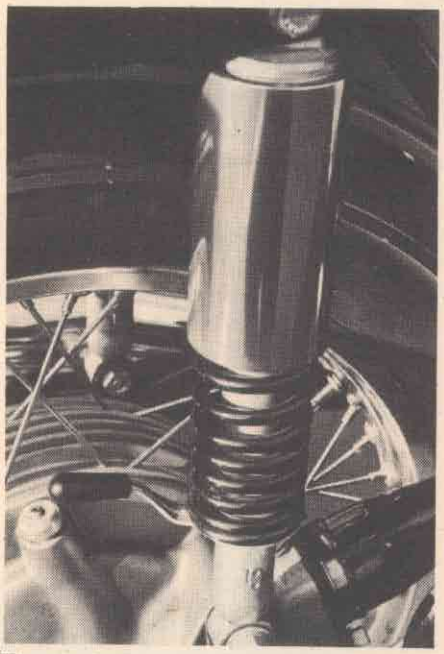
In starting, the fuel level is raised temporarily by depressing the tickler so that the engine receives a richer mixture. Then twist the throttle quarter turn and hit the starter button. We found that our test model fired up and roared to life immediately. Using the auxiliary kick starter, we found it to be as efficient as the old starters nine times out of ten, bringing the machine to life on the first kick. But then, BMW's were always known to be easy starters.

Since the R60/5 is primarily designed to be a road machine, we put it through its paces as one. We took it out on a highway with both long straight stretches as well as some interesting turns and curves. It became immediately apparent that this machine was stable at all speeds and a far better handler than its predecessors.

Cornering is excellent. We were able to hard corner the machine and really lean it over before it gave any hint of scraping. The foot-pegs, foot controls, side and center stands are all neatly tucked away high and close inside. On both smooth and unsmooth straightaways it holds a steady straight line, due in part to the gyroscopic effect of the transversely mounted engine.

Throttle response is quick and positive and the torque can be felt particularly on the lower end. At a standstill you can rev up the motor and feel the machine pull to one side. This sideways pull is totally nonexistent at speed or when riding. We found that the machine starts to pull strongly and smoothly at about 2500 rpm. At 4000 rpm the bike really comes on. From there on up, it's almost well, well, hairy.

We test lots of bikes and we're usually prepared for some stunning results. But it's strange to encounter such performance from a BMW which has been something of a stone. The rider who has owned a BM will be the one most impressed and sur-



The rear shocks have three stages of adjustment according to specific load conditions.

All BMW models now come with turn signals as required by new Federal legislation.

The bike could be leaned way over and proved to be a much better handler than its predecessor.

Kick stands and foot pegs plus foot controls all tuck out of the way underneath the bike.

prised by these untraditional super changes in the onetime docile performer.

Another very noticeable change is the R60/5's new light feel. This is in part due to the fact that the overall machine is lighter than its predecessor. Fenders are fiberglass as opposed to the older metal ones and help in diminishing overall weight.

The greatest factor in diminishing the weight and improving the handling characteristics at the same time is the new re-designed frame. This improved frame was designed specifically for solo riding whereas the old frame was a dual purpose one adaptable for sidecar mounting.

The new cradle-type tubular frame of oval tubing in the greater stress areas is of welded construction. The down tubes intersect the spinal tube at the steering head, an arrangement which the BMW people claim permits "a certain longitudinal elasticity of the steering head and at the same time very great torsional rigidity." We never felt any frame flexing during the test.

Suspension has been improved too. There's at least an inch more of travel in the rear shocks. Total suspension travel is now a full five inches. The two rear shocks contain springs and hydraulic shock absorbers and have three stages of adjustment according to load conditions. Adjustment is simplified by means of a small lever extending from the lower part of each unit.

BMW has totally abandoned the Earles-type concept of front suspension in favor of the more popular and practical telescopic forks. Turning angle of the fork is 46 degrees in both directions. Steering is excellent. It's precise and has a light feeling to it.

Joe Oldham, our leader, managed to snap this shot just before he was unceremoniously run over by our road tester, Melvin DeSade.

Front forks now feature a full five inches of travel which will iron out the worst of roads.

All fenders are now made of fiberglass to lighten the load for the 600cc mill.

Bike comes in choices of "Lily" White, "Storm Trooper" Black and "Hi Ho" Silver.

The telescopic forks also eliminate the pendulous effects sometimes encountered with the Earles-type. At higher speeds they really fill the bill, resulting in superior performance and control. A steering damper is provided if you feel you need one.

The transmission for the three new models has been redesigned. The engagement of the gears is now accomplished through seven elongated dowels as opposed to the previous six circular dowels. This plus the improved shifter cam plate allows for quick, positive shifting.

Our test model shifted well, but it took a little getting used to. The new spring loaded shift mechanism really clunks the gears together. Two of our test riders found the louder than normal gear changes annoying. We feel that this solid sounding gearbox is something you can learn to live with. And if you can get used to pausing slightly between first and second, you can minimize the clunk.

Gear ratios are well spaced for a 4-speed gearbox, with first and second a little closer together. One beautiful thing about gearchanging in a BMW: you never strike a false neutral. On top of this, the internal spring loaded mechanism will reinstate the previous gears into engagement if the shift lever is not depressed far enough to properly engage the next gear.

Learning to feather the dry plate clutch is a snap. The clutch disengages readily with a short pull of the hand lever.

Our acceleration tests were fun. Acceleration throughout the entire gear and power range was excellent. This engine really pulls. There's more than enough usable passing power even in fourth gear. The engine is extremely smooth. Vibration below 50 mph is minimal and it's nil over 50 mph. One thing becomes obvious after extensive riding under all conditions. The BMW R60/5 has a better than average range of usable power.

Oldham's boss Supercycle jacket was handmade from an old Toneau cover off of an MG.

Top end is strong too. Out of sight of the local fuzz, we were able to get the machine up to 103 mph. And that's pretty fast for a BMW. The R75/5 should go even faster.

Braking ability is vastly improved. The old brakes on the R60 worked in most instances but were prone to fade. The new brakes are stronger, much more highly resistant to fade and are of better construction. The new drums are more rigid with cast-iron inserts. The new softer bonded brake linings are a vast improvement over the old riveted ones. They grab better and stop you right now. On severe, all out, wheel locking stops, we did note a slight chattering of the rear brake just before it locked.

Electrics on the new R60/5 have also been beefed up. The 6-volt system has been discarded in favor of a 12-volt system. The heart of the system is a new battery by Varta, designed to emit the power necessary to operate the electric starter as well as the other necessary electrical components. A most important feature of the sophisticated electrical system is the new 3-phase 180-watt alternator rectified using silicon diodes and regulated by means of a voltage regulator. Manufactured by Bosch, this highly efficient unit is compact and according to BMW will fire the plugs even if the voltage in the battery drops as low as 7 volts. The ignition system consists of one set of points, a pair of coils and a centrifugal timing advance mechanism mounted on the camshaft.

Appearancewise, the R60/5 generated mixed emotions amongst us. The tank on this model has inherited

At speed the bike handled well with a minimum of vibration. Top speed was a respectable 103 mph.

a pregnant version of the 305 Honda hump. It does hold a lot of gas though. One thing everyone agreed on was that the bike doesn't appear as fat in person as it does in photographs. The paint job is excellent and you have a choice of white, silver or black.

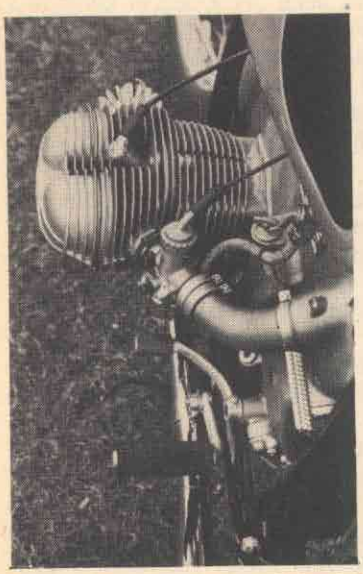
On the road the R60/5 is a comfortable riding machine. The seat is comfortable and will accommodate two easily for extended periods without undue stress on either rider or passenger. The new style handlebars are a welcome improvement over the older ones. They're similar in appearance to the western type bars so popular in this country. Directional signals are now installed on every new BMW.

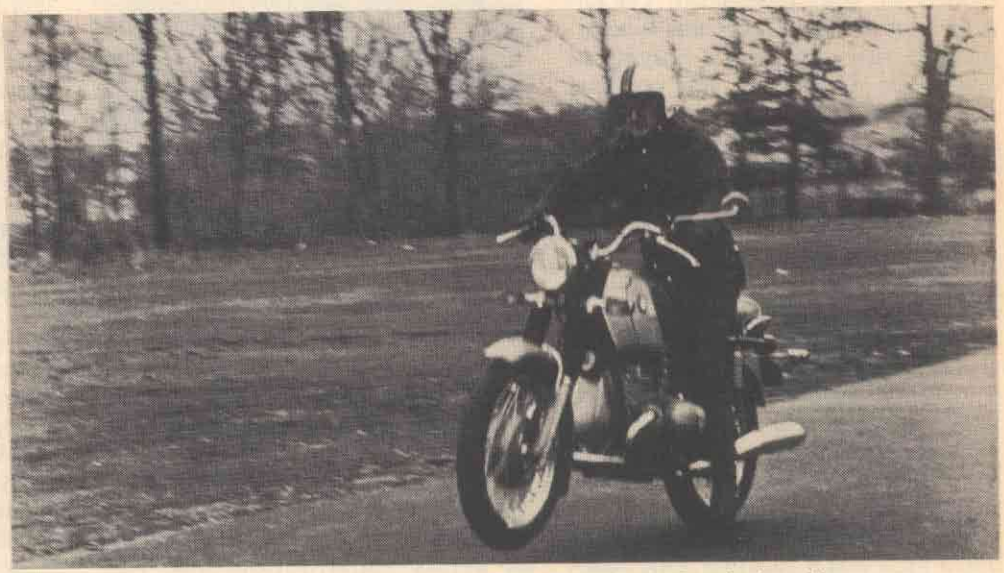
The Magura levers are the finest available. Good looking and durable, they pivot on nylon bushings and are spring loaded to minimize vibration. Cables are Teflon lined to eliminate binding.

The price of the R60/5 as compared to the older R60 is slightly higher. But when you take into consideration all the added goodies including the electric starter, which are automatically part of the package, the price isn't out of line.

BMW has a good thing going for them. They have updated and improved their breed. Their present slogan reads: "World's finest motorcycles for street and touring." They can now add: "at speed."

"... out of sight of the local fuzz we were able to get the machine up to 103 mph and that's pretty good for a BMW ..."





Horizontally opposed twin-cylinders have been retained. They are now made of light-weight alloy however. Right, clutch action is positive.

600 BMW R60/5

Base price	$1548
Engine type	OHV opposed 4-cycle twin
Bore and stroke	70.6 x 73.5mm
Displacement	599cc
Compression ratio	9.0 to 1
Horsepower	46 at 6600 rpm
Carburetion	Two 26mm Bing
Transmission	4-speed footshift
Clutch	Dry single plate
Primary drive	None
Final Drive	Shaft and bevel gear
Brakes	Drum
Tire size, front/rear	3.25 x 19/4.00 x 18
Lubrication	Wet sump
Fuel capacity	6.25 gallons
Dry weight	419 pounds
Wheelbase	54.6 inches
0 to 60 mph	7.9 seconds
Stand. start, 1/4-mile	15.9 seconds/85.4 mph
Top speed	103 mph