

**The DB2-J might be small, but the proof is in the riding. Here's a small bike that acquits itself well enough on tight, winding roads to show its tailight to much larger machines.**

into full-scale production, which by Bimota standards means a 100-bike minimum run.

Frankly, I thought riding the baby Bimota, beautiful as it may be, would be a let-down of epic proportions. I was wrong. Not only is the DB2-J a looker, it's a goer, too.

To concoct the J-type, which is only available with a half-fairing, Bimota used the same chrome-moly spaceframe and swingarm, Öhlins shock and Paioli fork as on the bigger bike, but with a 4.5-inch rear wheel rather than the 900's 5.5-inch rim. Front wheel is the same 3.5-inch rim used on the bigger bike. Instead of the twin 12.6-inch rotors and four-piston calipers as on the 900, there's only one of each on the J-type. The J also does without an oil cooler, and has no chin fairing. What it does have is a massive 47-

tooth rear sprocket, which is 10 teeth bigger than the final drive-setup on the 900 and looks like something off the back wheel of a hillclimber. The airbox is different from the 900, even with the same pair of 38mm Mikunis fitted as on the bigger bike. The Bimota-developed exhaust system is the same.

The biggest single difference is the 398cc motor, claimed to deliver a very healthy 49 horsepower at 10,000 rpm. The J-type's motor won't pull cleanly below 4000 rpm without some transmission snatch, but it comes on strong at 4000 rpm, and from 6000 rpm upwards, the acceleration is surprisingly brisk.

With a claimed top speed of 118 mph, the little DB2-J is



able to keep up with almost anything on four wheels. It's a perfect country-roads bike. If you use the gearbox to exploit that surprisingly punchy midrange, the excellent-handling DB2 chassis lets you swing through twisting lanes as quickly as any bike, and a lot faster than most.

Still, I wonder how many people will opt for a DB2-J at about \$18,000 when, for about \$3000 more at current British prices, they can have the half-faired DB2 900. Market forces will answer that question, but the only way Bimota can really find out is by making the bike and seeing if anyone will buy it. Put it this way—if you buy one, and nobody else does, at least you'll have an instant collector's item.

—Alan Cathcart